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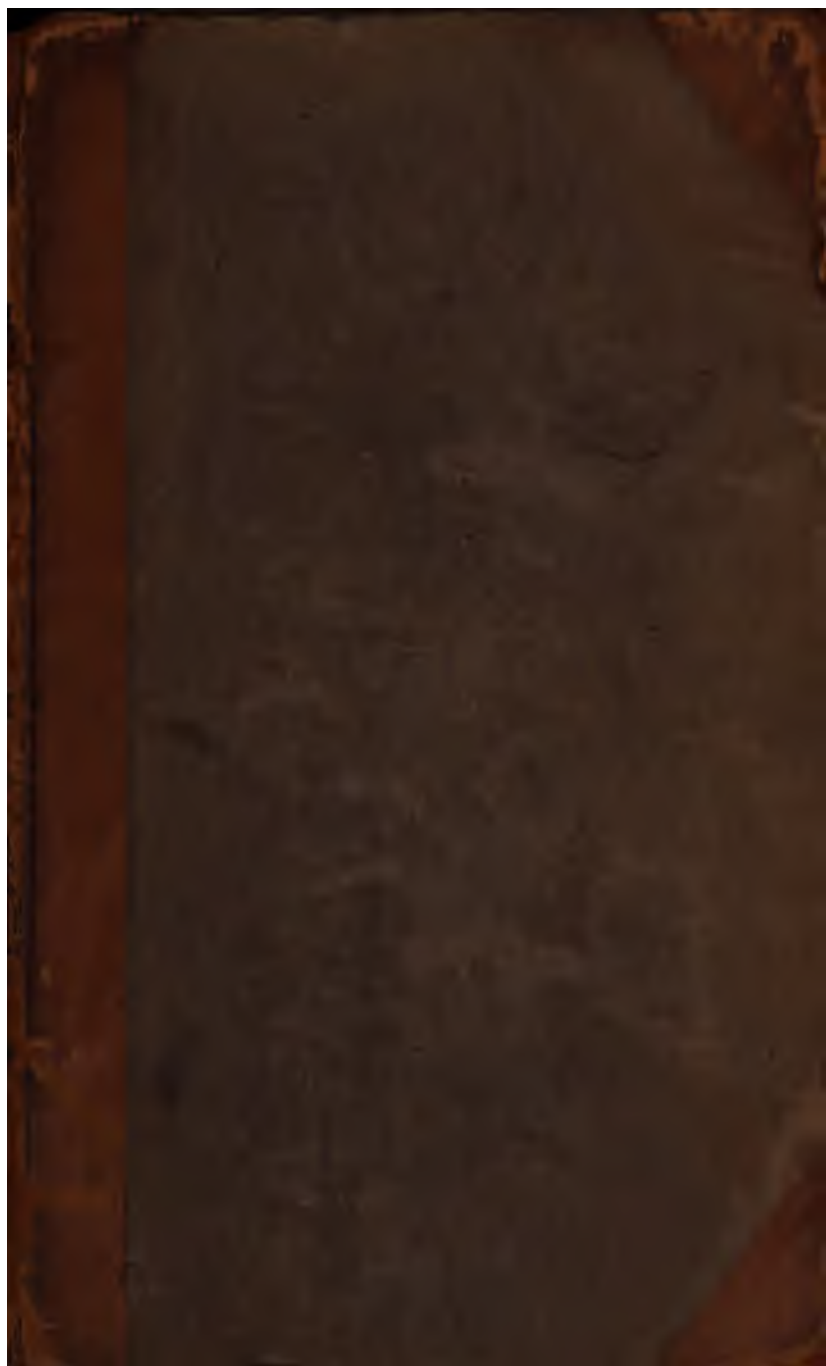
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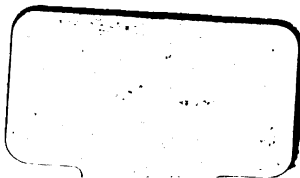


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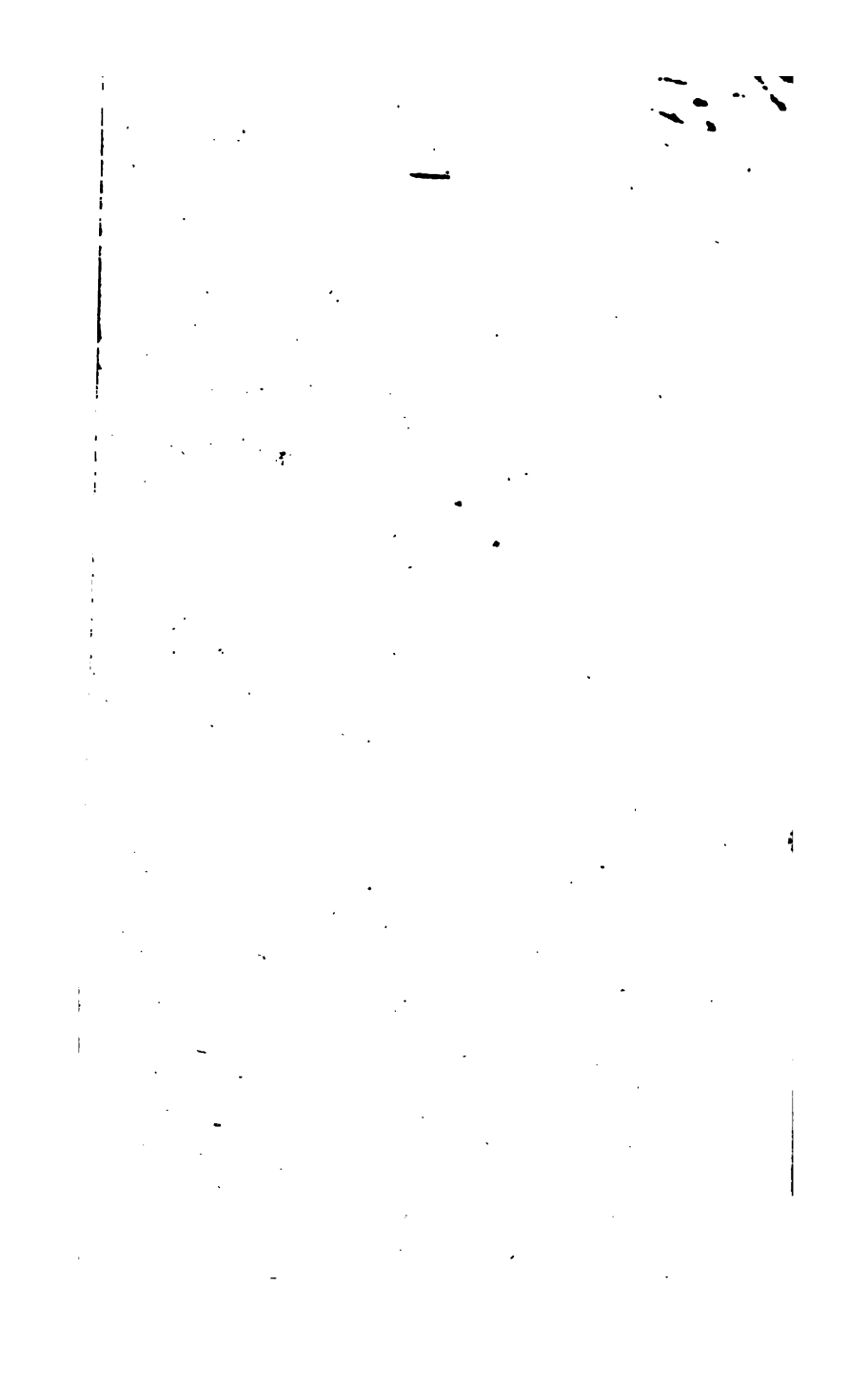
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*When the King of Kings reduced himself to this
state for the Salvation of Mankind,
dare we complain?*

THE
CAPTIVE OF VALENCE;

OR
THE LAST MOMENTS

OF
PIUS VI.

"Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried,
"The Saint sustain'd them, but the PONTIFF died."—POPE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE
CAPTIVE OF VALENCE.

CHAP. I.

Arrival of Pius VI. at Vienna.

THE spring had seldom been so fine as the year when I met my old friend. Nature, seeming to favor my wishes, had removed every obstacle to our re-union: the pleasure of a delightful walk would alone have proved sufficient to

draw me from home. That innocent relaxation after a long and intense study derived a new charm from the information communicated to me by the Marquis. One evening I set off with my sister for the abode of my interesting neighbour. I reached our usual place of meeting at the appointed hour ; but our venerable friend was not there, and we were requested by his servant to follow him to the library, where his master was confined by the gout. There I found him reclining on a couch. “Excuse me ladies (said he) if I give you the trouble of coming so far ; but as you see I am unable to walk,

yet a little pain shall not prevent me from gratifying your curiosity concerning the journey of the Pope to Vienna—We directed our course by ~~Lux~~ *Luxembourg*, that place so long the object of catholic devotion, and the great riches of which tempted so many pirates who had never been able to plunder it. Pius VI. added his presents to those magnificent offerings the piety of kings and of no less exalted votaries had deposited at the foot of the hallowed altar ; too much enlightened to adopt the superstitious belief that an angel had carried from India the habitation of the blessed Virgin, he did not pay his adoration

to the fabulous mansion, but offered up his prayers to the Mother of Christ, to whom Laurretta was especially dedicated ; and supplicated her to implore her divine Son that he might touch the rebel heart of the Emperor.

“In the great checks of nature the surface of the globe experiences a dreadful convulsion ; mountains are melted down into valleys, whole forests are consumed by lightning, or fall under the axe of the woodman ; immense cities vanish from the earth ; and the learned seek in vain the place where stood the proud Babylon ; all objects on this terrestrial globe are subject to alteration—rivers alone generally pur-

sue their course without any very perceptible change ; and therefore are they chosen by history as lasting witnesses of the great events she relates. The Euphrates has immortalized the name of Alexander ; the banks of the Rhine proclaim the brilliant achievements of Louis XIV. and the Rubicon ever reminds us of the surprising fortune of Julius Cæsar ; he crossed its waves to conquer his declining country ; Pius VI. passed it to go to Cesena ; and one of his attendants commemorated those two grand epochas by some Italian lines, of which I only can remember the sense :

“ ‘ Cæsar traversed the Rubicon to bring war into the heart of his country, and Pius VI. crosses it now to bring peace to Vienna.’

“ Those ‘ home-felt pleasures which prompt the patriot’s sigh,’ prepared the sweetest sensations to the tender heart of Braschi, hastening to revisit his native town. ‘ O my dear friend (exclaimed he) what joy shall I experience in the embraces of my old relations ! I feel the short time I shall spend among them will alleviate my long suffering. I must again with you, companion of my youth, walk over those fields, the scene of our infantine sports. ‘ Yes (said I) we shall see once more the cottage where you restored happiness to the

wretched inhabitants.' 'What do you still remember that trifling incident?' 'Woe to him who could forget such an act of matchless goodness ! Perhaps we should entertain a better opinion of mankind were all the good deeds recorded ; but man is less moved by them than by the recital of crimes ; he prefers that which agitates him strongly, and that is the reason why history is more the annals of murders than of virtuous actions ; as long as I live I shall remember the cottage of Cezena.' Pius VI. smiled and pressed my hand tenderly—fulsome flattery can only please stupid vanity ; the approbation of a

friend delights the humblest heart. I congratulated myself on having reminded the illustrious traveller of that trait in his youth which for a few moments seemed to suppress every sorrowful reflexion, and dispose his soul to the felicity that awaited him in his native country, in the bosom of his family.

His relations came to meet him several miles on the road ; and falling on their knees, asked his benediction ; but he alighted from his carriage, pressed them in his arms, and laid aside all pontifical ceremonies for the enjoyment of their caresses. His female relations kept at a respectful distance, on account

of the etiquette which forbids a Pope to hold any converse with a sex, who could be of no danger to a man generally so advanced in years when elected. My friend requested me to bring them to him ; and offered them his hand, which they kissed with fervour ; his ardent mind could not submit to unnecessary customs ; he had abolished that which deprived a Pope of the company of women ; as he thought if Prelates, commendable for their virtues and morality, were allowed to admit, without any scandal, their female relations and pious women into their palace, the supreme Pontiff could equally ad-

mit his sisters and his nieces, their husbands and children to his table. He therefore dined with them every day while at Cezena; and who could have refused Pius so innocent a pleasure?

“ Every eye was turned on him, and his countenance expressed that tranquil satisfaction of a pure conscience, which does not try to impose on the multitude by vain and ostentatious formalities.

“ ‘ It is natural that a great Lama should conceal himself in his palace,’ he used to say, ‘ and that he should appear once a year surrounded by such a number of lights as to dazzle superstitious devotees

into the belief that he is still the same that he was seven hundred years ago ; mysterious ceremonies are necessary to give that absurd fable some semblance of truth ; but why should we, the vicars of Jesus Christ on earth, we who are of the same nature as men, make ourselves inaccessible to them ? Why shun virtuous women ? Did not our Saviour die for their sake as well as for ours ? Was he not followed by holy women, who more courageous than his disciples, would never quit him even on Mount Calvary ? I do not see, therefore, why the Pope should deprive himself of their conversa-

tion in public, and avoid his female relations ; for no sanctity nor dignities ought to break the sacred ties of families.' I could not but approve of so wise a reasoning, which convinced me that true virtue is above affectation.

“ The affable demeanour of Pius VI. while at Cezena filled every body with rapture ; proud of having so respectable a Pontiff chosen amongst them, happy in their mediocrity, the contented inhabitants made no other request of his Holiness, than to honour them with his visit when he returned from Germany, and that favour he readily promised.

The very evening we arrived at Cezena I went to the poor cottage, but I found it converted into a comfortable farm ; I feared I had mistaken the place inhabited by misery fifty years since ; nevertheless, I knocked at the door of this new abode ; a woman far advanced in years opened it, and led me to another much older. " Might I presume, Madam," said I, " to ask for a poor family who lived in a decayed house, on the ruins of which this seems to have been built ? " " This house, (she replied,) belongs to my children ; they have it from their forefathers, who inhabited it for many ages ; assailed by

misfortune, they had been obliged to sell most of the land belonging to the farm, and were unable to repair the ruined walls ; that family you mention was perishing with hunger, while my husband lingered in a jail ; when an angel restored him to liberty, and to a disconsolate wife. From that time every thing has prospered with us, misfortune has fled before John Braschi, as the hoary frost vanishes before the genial rays of the sun. Having some years ago inherited a considerable sum of money, we purchased our lands back again, and my aged husband is gone to rest in the bosom of the Omnipotent, leaving to his children a comfortable

maintenance. He never forgot that he was indebted to Signor Braschi for his happiness, and never failed to felicitate him on every promotion in the church; he always received the most obliging answers; but alas! he has not had the satisfaction to see his benefactor supreme Pontiff. He had been dead five years when we heard this agreeable news; we all shared in the universal joy. My sons are gone to Cezena with their wives and children to see once more our protector, the excellent being to whom we owe all our prosperity; for had it not been for him my husband must have died in jail; I

could never have survived my grief; and our children would have had no other asylum than those erected by charity—judge therefore of our attachment to Pius VI.

“Delighted to find so much gratitude, more rare than benevolence, for the one gratifies self-love, while the other wounds the pride of vile minds, I promised the good old woman to endeavour to procure her an opportunity of expressing her thanks to his Holiness, as I knew how pleased he would be to contemplate the fruits of his good nature. The next day was spent in preparing a little fete which I intended for my illustrious friend.

“ About seven in the evening I proposed to walk in the environs of Cezena, as he had intended it. He consented, and, followed by crouds of women, children and old people, who flocked to the road, I led him towards the valley where stood the cottage. The night was quite dark when we reached it ; on a sudden his eyes were struck with an illumination so contrived, as to imitate the twilight of morn ; he discovered an old ruined cabin, and sounds, similar to the groans we had heard the first time we entered that abode of wretchedness, issued from the tottering walls. My friend surprised, looked at me, and sus-

pected that I wished to bring to his memory an action which his modesty endeavoured to make him forget. Had he not apprehended to hurt my feelings he would have proceeded no farther ; but I requested him to come into a place where we might be of use to the inhabitants. His Holiness had hardly reached the threshold of the cottage when it immediately disappeared ; and in its place he saw the farm illuminated and adorned with garlands of flowers, all the family dressed with ribbons, like the livery of Braschi, and crowned with flowers, deposited at the feet of Pius VI. basketsful of the finest

fruits, saying, 'To your Holiness we owe all we possess; vouchsafe to accept of the first produce of our farm.' They conducted him to the largest room, where they had raised a throne. Braschi refused to sit upon it, and said to the old mother, whose infirmities had prevented her from coming to meet him, 'Allow me, madam, not to be the Chief of the Church, but a fellow citizen of the good people of Cezena.' The supper over, fireworks terminated a feast which seemed to please the Sovereign of Rome much more than the magnificence of the Vatican. Two days after, he set off from Cezena, fol-

lowed by the prayers of the inhabitants, and most sincere wishes for his Holiness, and his fortunate return to his native place.

“On his getting into the coach, he was much surprised to see me sit down by him: ‘What! said he, you do not stay at Cezena?’ ‘Could you think that I would let you undertake such a tedious journey alone? No, my venerable friend, allow me that familiar appellation, your letters could never have removed my apprehensions for the health of a person who is so dear to me.’ I saw that his Holiness was pleased by that mark of affection, and we pursued our jour-

ney without any accident to the banks of the Po, where the Doge of Venice had equipped the Buccentor,* We sailed for Venice, and having reached the town, the most considerable persons in the republic came to compliment Pius VI.

“ I shall not trouble you with an account of the different cities we visited ; the successor of St. Peter was every where received as that Prince of the Apostles would have been ; every where he gave proofs of his piety and modesty. He wished to travel *incog.* but the Emperor would not suffer it, thinking,

* It was the same ship in which the Doge espoused the sea.

no doubt, that as he meant to refuse the proposal of his Holiness, he must make amends by paying him every mark of respect, judging of the Pontiff as he would of other men, who are more sensible to public demonstrations than to the heartfelt expressions which they are frequently strangers to. My friend attached very little value to all outward shew; yet to please the Emperor he made his public entry with all the sacerdotal splendour. The Emperor and his brother came to meet him as far as Newkirchen, a few miles from Vienna. As soon as they descried his carriage, they alighted, so did the

Pope, who embraced the Emperor with signs of the sincerest affection. Joseph II. prevailed on his Holiness to come into his coach, and seated him on his right hand. They proceeded to the imperial chapel where a Te Deum was sung. The Emperor then conducted his guest to the apartments of the late Empress Maria Theresa, which was next to his own. It was impossible for Joseph II. to give greater proofs of his respect, but that respect was very far from a submission to the wishes of the Court of Rome. My friend soon perceived that all his actions were watched, and that the guard of

honor placed before his door did not receive orders from him alone.

“All these precautions were useless. Braschi was not come like a troublesome mind to sow dissensions between the Emperor and his people; he wanted not to intrigue, but convince the monarch; he therefore wished for nothing but a free access to the Emperor, whom he hoped to persuade into an alteration of his plans.

“Nevertheless, the people, moved by the sight of the Sovereign Pontiff, came to solicit the piety of the Chief of the Empire for the sake of religion, hastened in crouds on his way, and one might have said, like the Roman lawyers: *Ubi*

Papa, ibi Roma. They fancied themselves in the church of St. Peter when they saw Pius VI. officiating in the cathedral at Vienna during holy week ; but nothing could equal the pomp and solemnity of Easter Sunday." Here the Marquis shewed me a description of that festival wrote by a protestant to his friend :

“From the wonderful impression the presence of the Pope makes at Vienna you could easily comprehend how it could have formerly wrought sudden revolutions. I have seen the Pontiff several times, when he gave his benediction to the inhabitants of the metropolis ; I am not a catholic, nor

am I easily moved ; but I must own that sight drew tears from my eyes. It is hardly possible to express what an effect has the spectacle of upwards of fifty thousand people assembled in the same place by the same motive ; bearing in their countenance and in their humble posture, every mark of devout enthusiasm, while waiting for a benediction, on which depends, as they believe, their prosperity in this world, and their happiness in the next. Entirely taken up with that idea, regardless of the oppressive heat of the place, they admired the Chief of their Church with the thiara on his head, adorned with his pontifical robes, sacred

to them and magnificent to all, surrounded by the Cardinals then at Vienna, and all the high clergy of that town. The Pontiff, prostrating himself on the ground, his hands elevated towards Heaven, in the attitude of a man strongly persuaded that he offered up to the Almighty the prayers of a multitude, and whose looks expressed his sincere wish that they should be heard. Is it possible not to be struck with awe at the sight of a venerable old man of a noble stature and a most venerable physiognomy, full of the same zeal that wormed every surrounding bosom, giving his benediction to the multi-

tude prostrate before him? For my part I shall always preserve in my memory the strong impression such a scene made on my mind; how much stronger must it be on those who are apt to be dazzled by pompous ceremonies!

“ Nothing could be more affecting than to see the good Germans flock from the remotest parts of the empire to behold his Holiness; the Danube was covered with boats full of people, whose only wish was to receive the benediction of the Sovereign of the Church.

“ I must not omit an anecdote which has been related by several authors, but which, perhaps, you

have never heard : A countryman had come from a distance of one hundred and eighty miles to see Pius VI. and placed himself in one of the anti-rooms of his Holiness.

‘ What do you want here ? ’ asked the centinel. ‘ To see the Pope.’

‘ You cannot see him—get out.’

‘ No, I will wait until he passes this way ; I have plenty of time ; do whatever you want to do, and don’t mind me.’ And he sat down, and eat his bread quietly. He had thus been waiting for several hours, when the Emperor, informed of his perseverance, introduced him to the Pope, who received him with great cordiality, offered him his

hand to kiss, and gave him his benediction, and one of the medals he had brought from Rome. ‘How discreet are those town-folks,’ said the ingenious countryman, ‘they never would tell me that the Pope gave money to those that paid him a visit.’

“The reception of his Holiness by Prince Kaunitz was so strange that you must allow me to tell it. That minister, in his conduct something similar to the Earl of Essex, had carried his pride so far as not to pay the first visit to the Pope; yet he seemed much flattered when Pius VI. asked him to appoint a day to shew him his pictures. On

that day the Pope found at the entrance of the Minister's palace the whole family in magnificent court dresses, and the servants in rich liveries. 'Where is Prince Kaunitz?' whispered I to the Pope. 'I do not know,' answered he, 'and, perhaps, we sha'nt see him at all.' A man in a morning dishabille approached the Pope, who offered him his hand to kiss, according to custom. Kaunitz, too proud to humble himself to those marks of respect, started, then familiarly took that hand which the catholics consider as sacred. 'I am happy you wish to view my pictures; come, come, I will shew them to

you.' 'How, Prince Kaunitz! are you to be my *Cicerone*?' 'With great pleasure your Holiness.'—He then conducted the Pope to his gallery, and minutely described each picture with the most disgusting freedom.

"When we were alone, I asked his Holiness how he could bear the indecent familiarity of Kaunitz? 'I had but two steps to take, answered he, either to pass it unnoticed or to complain to the Emperor—the first I thought most becoming my station; but I must own I could hardly refrain from laughter, when I saw that insolent Minister take me by the shoulders

and whirl me about to shew me his pictures in the best light.' 'Such, said I to myself, is the fruit of Maria Theresa's excessive condescension to that man ; he thinks himself entitled to treat all the world with hauteur and disrespect, because his Sovereign honored him with her unbounded confidence ; he is a spoiled child, and it is better to laugh at his impertinence than to feel vexed by it.'

" Thus the visible Chief of our Church, professing the meekness of his Divine Master, avoided every cause of discussion with the Emperor, who on his side affected the utmost veneration for the

Pope. Leaving to God Almighty to probe the heart of man, he believed in the sincerity of the seeming piety of Joseph II. who might not have been devoid of religion although he supposed that a total submission to the Pope was not necessary to make a good christian. I leave to divines to resolve such a question ; but it is a well known fact that schism and a spirit of rebellion against the sacred truths of the gospel have always been the consequence of innovations in the discipline of the church, as if the one were closely united with the other, or as if God chose to punish the daring hand that would presume to touch the hallowed ark.

“ Nevertheless days and months elapsed and the Pope was unable to accomplish the object of his journey. Considerable presents, and in particular a pectoral enriched with brilliants, valued at 20,000l. were the only things his Holiness could obtain. I must not omit the disinterested answer of Pius VI. when Joseph offered him the pectoral: he told the Emperor he accepted it not as a present to himself, but to his successors, who would wear it as a token of his munificence.

“ No one was ignorant of the attachment of Braschi to his nephew; he was far from hiding it;

for in the eyes of a religious mind the affections of nature, provided they do not interfere with other duties, are more commendable than reprehensible. But when the Emperor, to give a proof of his great regard for his Holiness, created the Duke Braschi, a Prince of the Empire, without asking the usual tax which was 10,000*l.* the Pope thanked Joseph for his generosity, but returned him the diploma, requesting it should not then be made public, to prevent people from saying that the object of his journey was more the aggrandisement of his family than the interest of the church. Those who could

read the heart of that august pastor, must acknowledge that he was ready to make every sacrifice for the glory of religion, as Lewis XVI. for the welfare of his subjects ; yet they were both equally unfortunate : The late King saw, before he expired, France a prey to the most horrid dissensions ; and the implicit faith of Pius VI. in the promises of Jesus Christ, could alone remove his fear of a total extinction of religion.

“ But at this period nobody could foresee the cruel misfortunes that have since happened ; Atheism dared not yet lift up its impious head ; they could faintly per-

ceive the infernal vapour that threatened to plunge christianity in total darkness, if Heaven had not opposed to profaneness, courageous Prelates, who followed the example of their respectable leader.

“ We shall not anticipate those days of sorrow ; and shall follow Pius VI. back again to Italy carrying with him some hopes of an alteration in the Emperor’s mind, and of seeing him in future more submissive to the court of Rome. He experienced on his return the same affection that he had met with on his setting off for Vienna. Nothing could equal his entry into Venice ; that queen of the sea

could alone display such magnificence. The Patriarch and eighteen bishops of the republic went as far as Fusina to meet his Holiness, each in his gondola, with the general of the religious orders in his diocese, a galley richly decorated was ready for the Pope on the Brenta, and he was conducted in triumph, followed by numbers of barges, to the island of St. Georgio, two miles from Venice. There he found the Doge and the first magistrates, who shewed him the most profound respect. The ceremony of the marriage of the sea, which used to take place on the day of the ascension, was de-

ferred on purpose that the Sovereign Pontiff should honor it with his presence, but he set off unexpected for Bologna,* where he had a friendly interview with the Duke

* Many were the conjectures on that sudden departure. People had observed a great intimacy between the Doge and Pius VI.; they had several private conversations, which excited the jealousy of suspicious republicans; they were seen whispering to each other in public; the Doge had expressed himself perhaps too strongly on the conduct of the republic towards the Pope, and displeased the inquisitorial senators; they even remonstrated vigorously with the Doge; they reminded him of his duty, his dependence and his dangers. His Holiness suspected the cause of this uneasiness and fearing to distress a man whose civilities might be construed a crime against the state; without waiting for that marriage, as pompous as extraordinary, he left Venice on Whitsunday, which was the time appointed for that solemn ceremony.—(*Civil, Polit. and Relig. Hist. of Pius VI.*)

of Parma, grandson of Lewis XV. Halas, more fortunate than her sisters, the mother of that Prince, had left a transient glory for eternal happiness ; and the tender reception he made his holy guest, proved that the Duke had inherited her virtues and piety.

“ We proceeded to Cezena, where we were seen with new transports of joy. The more my friend was known, the more he was beloved. Such was his grandeur, the simplicity of his conduct, his personal modesty, and his munificence, that every body was forced to respect and admire him ; and the inhabitants of Ce-

zena expected his return as the tenderest relation waits for that of a parent. He wished to have stopped some days in that town, but his long absence required his presence at Rome, and he quitted it not without shedding tears ;— which were as a foreboding of the afflictions that should one day assail his hoary locks, and make him regret his humble habitation at Cezena. His relations, his friends, nay all the inhabitants followed him for many miles ; and I was obliged to separate from the dearest and best of friends.

“ One of my brothers had left at his death a widow and seve-

ral children. She requested that I should assist her in the laborious task of a guardian; I was forced to consent, and since the year 1782 to 1786, I resided at Cezena; and I can therefore only communicate to you my correspondence with Pius VI. and the Countess Falconieri during that period. I shall give you all the letters I have translated, as I feel that *pain* will for a few days deprive me of the pleasure of your conversation."

The Marquis gave me a parcel of papers; I requested he would inform me of the time I could renew my visits, and returned home,

loaded with my precious treasure,
I transcribed those that contained
any particulars concerning Pius
VI. during the absence of the Mar-
quis from Rome.

*Letter of Pius VI. to the Marquis of ***.*

“ROME, JULY 17, 1782.”

“Dear Friend,

“A few days after my arrival
here, I received your letter, and
should have answered sooner were
you one of those I should refer to
my secretary; but who could express
the pleasure I experienced from
your company in my journey to
Vienna, and the pain I feel at be-
ing separated from so dear a friend?
But I was obliged to consent to

your consecrating all your cares to your nephews and to your residence at Cezena, which it would have been better for the tranquility of my old age, had I never quitted—but Providence has ordained it otherwise, and I must submit. How enviable those who are not obliged to purchase by so many laborious duties trifling honors, which do not constitute happiness !

“ I found much agitation in the minds of the people here ; I was overwhelmed with questions, and answered in such a manner as not to make them believe my journey totally fruitless. I said that the

Emperor gave me so many proofs of affection, that his affability and good-nature led me to hope that my expectations would not be disappointed. I have been granted some important concessions, and flatter myself with obtaining more.* But

* Let us examine what was granted, and what was refused. The Pope wished to have prevented the suppression of every monastery; but that he could not obtain. All those named superfluous, were abolished, though not intirely annihilated.

Pius VI. was too much enlightened to blame a spirit of toleration founded on wisdom; yet he was too prudent, and too pious, to approve of that which displayed a total indifference to every religion, and aimed at the destruction of faith in Europe. A transaction took place on that subject, which could neither content nor intirely displease the head of the Roman church.

He could not obtain the revocation of those clauses put to the admission of his bulls in the hereditary states; nor to suppress those edicts which

those whose delight is to find fault with all authority, are not satisfied. I have found with sorrow that their number has considerably encreased during my absence, and was greater than I thought; of this I had a proof, which grieved me sincerely: As I came to my chapel one morning to implore the Omnipotent to guide me in my critical situation, I found on my desk a

free the monastic orders from the dependence of their generals residing at Rome.

If he was deprived of the right of granting dispensations, yet the honour of the church was preserved, and the discipline was not intirely changed; that right was conferred on the Bishops, who could not use it without leave of the Pope. Though his Holiness was obliged to make sacrifices, yet force was never employed against him, and religion was not profaned.

folded paper ; at first I took it for a petition ; but to my great mortification it was a most scurilous libel ending with the following words — ‘ What Gregory VII. the first of priests had established, is destroyed by the last of priests, Pius VI.’

“I own I was much vexed by the perusal of that insolent satire ; nevertheless, I tried to stifle my resentment, and I wrote these few lines with a pencil—‘ The kingdom of God is not of this world ; he that bestows Celestial crowns, does not bereave kings of power.— Let us give unto Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar ; and unto God what belongs to God.’ I depo-

sited the writing on the desk, desiring that none but he who placed it there, should be allowed to take it, if he was impudent enough to come for an answer : and so it happened. Such then is my reward for so tedious a journey, undertaken for the glory of the church.

“Some would have me to adhere strictly to those maxims the French call *Ultramontanes* ; and others, that I should hardly believe in God : but no spirit of party shall ever rule me. The gospel and the sacred canons are my law, and I hope God will abandon neither his church nor her pastor.

"I found my niece in perfect health, as charming and as affectionate as ever; she received me with her usual cordiality. The Countess has been ill, but is much better. They all send their compliments to the dearest friend of

" John Braschi."

The same to the same.

" ROME, May, 17, 1783.

"Dear Friend,

"My patience and condescensions to the Chief of the Empire have only emboldened him to offer me new insults. Nothing can equal his edict of the 28th of March, 1788. I intreat you to get and peruse it. The Em-

peror enters into details of discipline, unbecoming both the Imperial dignity, and the obedience of a Christian. He had already ordered that one mass only should be said at the same time in each church ; as if the presence of God could be constrained, and as if he could not be present on the several altars of a cathedral as he is in the whole universe. This savours much of Lutheran opinions ; but it does not satisfy Joseph II. He dictates to the pastors the time and number of their instructions ; he proscribes the use of musical instruments during divine service, allowing only an organ, as if the

the praises of God, had not ever been celebrated on harps and psalters; he has forbidden the use of the ostensor to give the benedictions of the holy sacrament, except in particular churches, and on particular days; convents can only employ the pyx and soborth: for I could never end the list of his minute details. I have been told that the King of Prussia, having heard of this strange law, has denominated Joseph II. his brother, the sexton: and thus a catholic sovereign becomes the derision of a freethinker.

“What I cannot comprehend, is, that a Prince, whose morals are

pure, and who knows how to command his passions, should imitate the conduct of Henry VIII. Had he to deal with a Clement, there is little doubt of Germany following the example of England; but I will not be guilty of that error.

“ I shall seek the strayed sheep; open the pale; and shall not, by refusing him admittance, expose him to the surrounding wolves.

“ I have written in the tenderest and most persuasive terms to the Emperor. The French and Spanish ambassadors say, that I lessen my dignity: my answer is, that there can be no degradation in endeavouring to maintain religion; and that I must employ the only

means in my power to present my reclamations to the Emperor, that I may shelter myself from the reproaches of God and man. If he seeks to deceive by false promises, the shame is to him, and not to me; but the apprehensions of failing in my attempts shall never make me forget my duty.

“ You did not say whether I could depend on the artist you mentioned, for the mausoleum of my predecessor. Ask him, dear friend, what are his demands for that work; but do not forget it is a Sovereign intends to employ Signor Canova. If prodigality is ever allowed to Princes, it is when

it serves for the encouragement of the fine arts.

“ I have no doubt of that ingenious man executing the plan he sent to me in a capital style ; the design is drawn with judgment and taste ; the statue of Temperance would render that virtue amiable, were we to judge only by the countenance given to it by Canova ; that of Humility, is truly that of a Christian who humbles himself before God, who will reward him with the eternal glory he seems to anticipate. This monument will form an epocha in an age where wit is so common, and genius so rare. Adieu, my dear friend, two

years are already elapsed since our parting—Is there no possibility of your coming here? might you not bring Canova, whom I fear to lose, and whom it would be hard to replace. If you cannot absent yourself from Cezena, request of our friend to bring that artist with him, I need not tell you how much more your visit would please all here, and especially yours,

“*J. A. Braschi.*”

“PS. There has lately died in this town, a man much venerated by the people for his virtues and sanctity; you might have seen him in the church, where he spent almost his whole life; his name is

Benedict Joseph Labre.* They say, that several miracles were wrought on his tomb. No one believes more than I do in the omnipotence of God ; yet I would not recommend to any one to follow the steps of Labre to deserve his grace. God has placed man in a delicious garden to cultivate and preserve it : labour has been prescribed to us, not as the indo-

* He was born in the parish of St. Sulpice d'Anetta, in the Bishopric of Boulogne Surmer, and died at Rome, the 16th of April, 1783, with the reputation of a saint. Labre had become a monk of the order of St. Bernard ; his austerities brought on him a serious illness ; he was advised by the physicians to quit the novitiate and come to Rome, where he lived by the alms of the faithful, and where he was beatified in 1792.

lent think for punishment of original sin, but as a new means of procuring happiness. It is therefore a disobedience to the general law of the Creator to spend one's life in contemplation, only reserved for a future existence; nevertheless, we cannot doubt of the various callings of the Almighty; the idle piety of Labre may have been acceptable to him, because his humble and ingenious charity converted the alms of the rich to the support of the indigent. That consideration will induce me to grant his beatification, which will be probably asked in a short time."

The same to the same.

“ROME, Dec. 23, 1783.

“Dear Friend,

“Who do you think is now at Rome? I leave you to guess in a thousand. It is the Emperor, who arrived unexpectedly, without even acquainting Cardinal Hergan, his minister of his intention. The Cardinal is quite delighted, as he felt himself in a very awkward situation concerning the pretension of Joseph II. to the Archbishopric of Milan; he will leave to him the negociation of this affair, in order to avoid every kind of contradiction in his conduct, as member of the sacred college, and as a subject of

of the Emperor.

“ Nothing was prepared for his reception ; and at the very time people doubted of his arrival, the Emperor was at my door. I forgot all our altercations on that occasion, and endeavoured to return all the polite and affectionate civilities I had received from him at Vienna. After a short conversation we went together to the church of St. Peter and he left me to go to the opera, where he had appointed to meet Chevalier D’Azara, and to communicate a plan of which, to his great surprize, the Spanish ambassador disapproved. He intended no less than to operate a schism

with the holy see. I am supposed to know nothing of this new extravagance, which must have had the most dangerous consequences.

I am sure that France and Spain will oppose a scheme that would so considerably encrease protestant influence, and philosophic impiety.

I shall write to you the result of both transactions. I don't believe we shall conclude any thing during his stay here. The report is, that he sets off for Naples in six days, but on his return, I hope to be able to make him abandon his unfortunate systems.

“ I hastened to inform you of this strange news, for who could

have supposed that Joseph II. would have chosen the time when we most disagreed, to come and see me ; but I hope his visit will turn to the advantage and glory of the church. Some try to alarm me on the temporal views of the Emperor. The mob, ever fond of novelty, have received him with enthusiasm. The words '*Viva il nostro Imperatore,*' 'Long live our Emperor' were heard ; yet I do not believe the Romans could be so blind as to exchange the mildest government for that of a Prince whose unbounded ambition, so peculiar to that family, must cause a constant state of warfare, the ex-

pence of which falls on the multitude. I let him quietly swallow a little flattery he generously pays for, and which will vanish like smoke the instant he leaves this. The poor benefit by his prodigality, and my power runs no danger. At all events, if the church prevails, your friend forms no other wish, than that of seeing the Marquis of ***.

Yours,

"J. A. Braschi."

The same to the same.

January 27, 1784.

"Dear Friend,

"I begin to hope, that the philosophical storm is over. The Emperor is returned according to his

promise, and much altered in his ideas of innovation. It is said, that the King of Naples has spoken to him with his usual bluntness, which has been more persuasive than the eloquent speeches of the French and Spanish Ambassadors. Every thing is settled at last: I have named Visconti to the see of Milan, and conciliated by that means the interest of Rome with the wish of the Emperor, who had expressed a desire that M. Visconti should be chosen Archbishop. We parted with the promise to respect our mutual rights. I am glad that this important affair is terminated; the idea of a schism alarmed me;

may these be the last dissensions during my pontificate ! As yet strong and in good health, I could oppose courage and resolution to the plans of the Emperor ; but I feel that if overwhelmed with age and infirmities, I had been obliged to rely on others for the result of so delicate a negociation, things must have grown worse, and I might no longer reckon pious Germany among the number of my flock.

“ I have strongly recommended Mr. *** to Cardinal de Bernis, according to your wishes, and he promised to write to me to Versailles concerning him. Our works are going on well : Canova sur-

passes himself; he is really the Michael Angelo of the age. Will you come and admire his *chef d'œuvre*? But has not friendship power sufficient to restore you to me? I do not doubt that imperious duties separate you from my family, who complain, as well as myself of your too long absence. *Adio il mio carissimo amico.*

“J. A. Braschi.”

The same to the same.

“September 15, 1784.

“Dear Friend,

“I have just received a letter from the King of Naples, who informs me of the dreadful misfortunes that have befallen Calabria.

What I had already heard from private report had sincerely grieved me, but the details communicated by the Neapolitan ambassadors increase the horror which those great convulsions of nature always inspire. When we think that a beautiful country is now a frightful desert, where the elements combine to destroy that part of the land which has escaped conflagration, or has not immersed under water: we tremble that Italy should return to the bosom of the sea, from which it seems formerly to have emerged.

“The King says, that having little means to succour the unfortunate

who starve now on the ruins of their habitations, he had ordered that the revenues of all the monasteries should be employed in relieving the wants of the wretched Calabrians; and that he hoped I would not oppose a measure dictated by humanity. I hastened to answer, that as the property of the church belonged to the poor, it would be cruel not to assist these desolate people. I have sent my share of the contribution, which I desire the Bishops to divide amongst the poorest families in Calabria. I do not know whether the Zelanti will look upon me as the last of priests, but I

should have thought myself the last of men, had I been capable of preventing the charitable intentions of the King of Naples towards those deplorable victims of celestial vengeance. I fear the effects of this awful convulsion will be felt by the whole globe; the thick fogs which have obscured the sun for several days, even in the northern parts of Europe, must have changed the atmosphere: who can tell the consequences this may produce on the human species? Perhaps physical and moral causes have not been sufficiently analyzed. The fact is, that great crimes are destruc-

tive maladies; and that if sovereigns could without impropriety bleed some of their subjects, they would probably avoid revolutions, which destroy numbers, whether repelled by force or allowed to take their natural course. Alas! I should wish, for the sake of the unhappy Calabrians, and for the world in general, that these volcanic matters had remained embosomed in the earth; but that spread in the air, they should operate on the minds of the people already too prone to adopt false systems.

“ You must find by my last letters, that the Emperor persists

in his plans ; I know but God who can stop him in his schemes : nevertheless, he will not find it so easy to execute them in the Netherlands as in Germany ; and I shall only encourage the efforts of the Brabanters in preventing him from disseminating religion in that vast province of the Empire. I will send to them none but the most prudent men ; God forbid that I should lead them to unfurl the standard of rebellion to defend my prerogatives ; I know none that is worth a drop of blood ; and I believe I am more tolerating than modern philosophers, but they are the fashion. They will vanish like

every thing else that depends on worldly vanity; and the time may come, when perhaps it will be as great an injury to call a man a philosopher, as they pretend it an insult to call him a bigot. You will find this a long letter; but my heart seeks in yours for that peace I so much require. Adieu, my dear friend, Yours,

“ J. A. Braschi.”

CHAP. X.

*Transactions of Pius VI. with the Court of
France,*

THREE weeks were elapsed since I had seen the Marquis ***; his gout was so painful that he was unable to receive me during that time. At last he sent word, that he should be glad of a visit from me, and I went to meet him, not at the usual place on the mossy bank, but in a beautiful grotto, where his taste had as-

sembled all the corals, shells, and fossils found on the coast or the mountains of Italy. Large pieces of rock chrystal, reflecting the prismatic rays of the sun, borrowed a new lustre from the fiery garnet and the golden topaz placed by their side; and seemed, if I may be allowed the expression, to give a visible body to light.—The Marquis requested I should sit down by him on a rustic bench of reeds—“Come,” said he, “Madam, and partake of the illusion that charms my eyes in this grotto, it is made on the plan of a much larger one my venerable friend had constructed in the gar-

dens of the Palazzo Quirinale, where he spent the summer; it was adorned with the finest antique statues, and in particular, with that of Harpocrates, God of Silence. This grotto, though on a smaller scale, unites a tolerable collection of the three kingdoms of natural history; it was a gift of Pius VI. and I have had the good fortune to save it from the banditti that has ravaged my country. Thinking the systematic classifications too formal and uninteresting, I have ranged them in the same promiscuous manner as the Creator has elegantly dispersed them on the vast field of nature."

I admired the fancy of Mr. *** in the arrangement of these various productions; he had contrasted the scarlet of the coral with the delicate purple of the pale amethyst, the sharp points of the sea-star with the rounded cornu amonis, the shining beetle with the sombrous green sea moss; and thus had banished the monotony of a museum. A purling stream refreshed the delicious retreat. From the expensive manner in which he had decorated it, I guessed he meant to settle in France, and took the liberty of putting him the question.

He answered, " After the death

of Pius VI. a very natural reflection occurred to me : I was then convinced your revolution would spread over the whole world ; and I preferred residing in a country where it was already compleated, than in another where it was approaching. Unforeseen events have fortunately put a stop to the torrent of licentiousness ; every Government shakened to its foundations, has, by a general peace, acquired new solidity. I might have therefore returned to my native land, but since the death of my friend it is bereaved of its former attraction. A man of fourscore cannot easily undertake a

tedious journey; and had I been inclined to quit France, (added he with the gallantry of ancient times) I should not choose the moment when I have found so pleasing an acquaintance as you, Madam."

I thanked him for his politeness, expressed my anxiety during his illness, and returned him the pocket-book he had entrusted me with, informing him, that I had copied some letters that would serve for this history; I read the first part of it, he seemed quite pleased, encouraged me in the pursuit, and gave me the ample materials to accomplish it.

“The misfortunes which have assailed my illustrious friend, are so connected with the French Revolution, that I cannot give you an account of the last year of his Pontificate without bringing to your recollection painful remembrances, and retracing the crimes that dragged Pius VI. from the papal throne, and spread desolation over your wretched country.

“During the first year of his promotion, Pius VI. gave to the Court of France the most unequivocal proofs of wisdom and attachment, and of his wish to maintain a good understanding between Versailles and the Vatican.

Louis XVI. respected and cherished religion; but he did not, like his grandfather, foresee the direful consequences of innovation. Louis XV. dreaded the modern philosophers, and prevented them with all his power from meddling with Government. Louis XVI. who believed them occupied with the welfare of mankind, listened to their specious language, and chose his ministers amongst them.

“All the sectaries of modern philosophy were inimical to the clergy: the opinions of those who thought that all ends with life, strongly militated with those of

of people, who, believing in eternity, employed their time in offering up prayers to the Omnipotent for their brethren and for themselves. Amongst philosophers, those who had preserved some idea of a supreme Being, and called themselves Deists, thought that prayers were useless, and looked upon all those who spent some hours in imploring the mercy of God, as idle fools. They had all combined to obtain the suppression of every religious order, whose immense riches tempted their cupidity; for modern philosophers do not disapprove of the love of gold,

as their conduct has demonstrated; but they dared not at first strike so great a blow, and tried to persuade the king and the nation into their destructive plans, by proposing the annihilation of the Antonines, a religious order who had the care of hospitals during the crusades. Their services being no longer of use, it was easy to induce Louis XVI. to grant their property to the order of Malta, which united to religious duties those prerogatives attached to nobility. It was not spoiling the church, but enriching men whose courage ought to equal their piety, with the

property of an useless community: they hid their plots against religion under the pretext of utility, for that was then the fashionable word, soon after replaced by that of reform. The Cardinal de Bernis, who with great sense possessed as much genius as his colleagues of the French academy, discovered their motives in attempting the property of the Church, and imparted his ideas to his Holiness. Yet they thought it was better not to oppose the interest of a powerful order, whose navy was ever ready to protect the Italian seat.

“The Pope determined to give

his consent, but to his great surprise he found all the French bishops rejected the measure. Wishing to satisfy the clergy, without breaking off with Louis XVI. he named a commissary to inquire into the reasons of the Bishops; they did not at first sight appear of sufficient importance to impede the views of the King, but they were grounded on their knowledge of the irreligious spirit prevailing in France, and the Bishops very properly apprehended that if that usurpation was allowed to take place, it would not prove the end of the philosophical career. Vainly did

Pius endeavour to prevent those detrimental changes; all the ministers of the late King had imbibed the new system; the Holy Father, unwilling to expose his authority, preferred to leave it to time and his paternal care to restore Religion to her former lustre. Alas! he was cruelly disappointed in his hopes. He was truly fond of the French, and as Cardinal de Bernis properly observed, *He had a French heart*; and nothing but revolutionary fanaticism could have ever prevailed on a Nation, formerly looked upon as the most flourishing and the most polished, to forsake their primeval faith.

“There are unhappy beings, upon whom each new event seems to heap every kind of misfortune; and such was the fate of a great Queen, and of the Prince of the Church, who by the most cruel circumstance were exposed to the censure of malignity; the less was my friend inclined to the weak minutiae of bigotry, the more he wished to preserve the proper dignity of the Church; he could not therefore but grieve when he heard that a Cardinal, forgetting that respect due to the Roman people, should ask to be tried by the Parliament of Paris, though he had promised upon oath to

acknowledge no other tribunal than the sacred college. His colleagues, irritated by his pusillanimity, intreated the Pope to send a thundering letter to the cabinet of Versailles. My friend wrote to the King himself, and in the softest and the most affectionate terms: 'I hope,' he said, 'that your piety will prevent you from wounding my heart, and that I shall have the satisfaction of seeing the rights of the church protected under your wise government. Alas! I am too much overwhelmed already, when I see them in another country daily trampled upon.'

“The Cardinal de Bernis, anxious to see that ridiculous and ~~wretched~~ trial suppressed, wrote to the Minister—‘Beware of a scandalous proceeding. If you constantly contradict the Holy See, it may yet prove formidable. Is it not better to give up to the tender supplications of the dove, than to dare the talons of the angry eagle?’ The King of France, the wisest, the best minded, and even in many points the most enlightened, of his council, made the following answer to his Holiness:—‘I sincerely feel for the sorrow you experience on account of the critical situation of a

* Cardinal de Bernis
de la Motte, about the Queen's jewels

Bishop, member of the Sacred College; and be assured that it is equally painful to me. But since the Cardinal himself chose his tribunal, it were more scandalous still to bring him before another.'

"The Pope perceiving he would be as unsuccessful in this as in every other transaction with secular powers, endeavoured at least to protect the honor of the Sacred College, by suspending Cardinal de Rohan from his clerical functions until he had justified his conduct at Rome, either in person or by proxy. He was acquitted of forgery and swindling; but the Majesty of the throne, severely

hurt by the imprudent conduct of the thoughtless Cardinal, excited his Eminence, who had been so grossly duped by sharpers leagued to entangle him in their snares, they all escaped punishment except Madame De La Motte.—Cagliostro came to Rome to impose on credulity; but his cheats, of which the parliament of Paris would not take cognizance, awoke the attention of the inquisition. Cagliostro was arrested, and all his papers seized.

“ Among them was found, (says Gorani) the plan of a conspiracy against the Roman temporalities. That author, who doubts of no-

thing, nevertheless entertains suspicions of the truth of this plot; yet he names one of the greatest men in the French court as an accomplice to this mountebank: but such an absurdity did not deserve to be related. Although the court of the most virtuous of Kings was ever so corrupt, it is certain that the persons that compose the list of robbers in the *Memoires Secrettes*, were positively innocent of such crimes: those of the swindler were thought by the inquisition sufficient to deserve death; but my friend mitigated the punishment to a perpetual imprisonment. This would appear

more cruel than the loss of life, if we did not know that hope entering the dungeon of the wretched captive, shews him the iron gates burst open by a powerful hand who will restore his liberty; every day he flatters himself will be the last of his sufferings; if each day baffles his expectation, the succeeding morn renews the same thought, and thus lightens his fetters. One must be quite unacquainted with the heart of man to suppose, that to the possibility of his re-entering society, he will prefer the certainty of dying on a scaffold. The loss of liberty, though terrible,

is therefore less cruel than death. It was not then from a refinement of barbarity that the Pope suffered Cagliostro to live; no man was ever so humane: but the time was when calumnies against the ministers of the altar were looked upon as proofs of genius, great enough to give those impious slanderers the first place among the most celebrated writers.

“ My illustrious friend was extremely concerned at the light and unbecoming conduct of the Cardinal de Rohan, so unworthy a Dignitary of the Church. The declarations of many French prelates likewise sensibly affected

him. 'Do you know (he would say), that it is seriously proposed at Paris to secularize the religious orders, and that among the most zealous advocates for this innovation are the Prelates, and principally the Archbishop of Toulouse, who embraces this project with ardor? What do they propose by such a measure? Can they flatter themselves, that when government shall have the disposal of ecclesiastical property in their power, the revenues of the prelates will not fall a sacrifice also?' He related an anecdote on this subject, which seemed a prediction of what really happened a few years afterwards.

“You know (continued he) that Mons. de Brienne, is at the head of the commission, established to *reform* (as they are pleased to say) but in fact to destroy the Monasteries. A Prior of one of the convents of Monks, comprized in the number that were to be transported to another abode, shewed the ancient and equitable titles by which they held their property, in the hope of being permitted to end his days in his own Convent. My lord cried with vehemence, ‘All the Friarhood must be suppressed.’ ‘Don’t deceive yourself,’ replied the Monk, ‘after the Friarhood will come the

turn of the Priesthood, and then, my lord, that of the Prelatehood.' Monsigneur did not deign to listen to the words of a Monk. 'May it please the Almighty,' added Pius VI. pressing my hand, 'that Brienne shall not one day remember them with bitterness of heart.'

"The assembly of the Notables evinced to all Europe the perilous situation of France. 'When I consider this assembly,' said Braschi, 'I think myself in the chamber of a man afflicted with a violent malady, surrounded by a number of quack doctors, in whom he had long placed great

confidence. They at last declare their inability to remove his complaint. A consultation is called of the most able physicians; they examine the patient attentively, each gives his opinion, and no two agree: one recommends copious bleeding, another advises a strict diet, a third (perhaps the wisest) urges palliatives; they at last break up, leaving the patient in the agony, with no other hope than Providence, as Benedict XIV. used to say, speaking of France. 'Such,' added my friend, 'will be the result of these assemblies. 'They imagine,' replied I, 'they have found a treasure in

the suppression of the annats, or first-fruits. Cardinal de Bernis has been consulted on this expedient, which it is pretended would save France more than a million of money. Monsieur de Bernis wrote an answer in the following terms.—

*Cardinal Bernis's Letter to Monsieur le
Comte de *****.*

“‘Is your Lordship not mistaken in the calculation of the annats? I am persuaded they do not amount to more than four hundred thousand crowns. You say that it is a large sum, which once taken out of the kingdom never returns. There again (with sub-

mission) I imagine you are deceived; this money is not so much given to the Head of the Church, as to the Sovereign of Rome, who by his benevolence enables his subjects to punish themselves with the charming *inutilities* of France, the product of which is quadrupled in the hands of our illustrious artisans. So that we might answer to the undevout who exclaim ‘We send gold to Rome and receive nothing in exchange,’ ‘For one louis d’or sent by France to Rome, the former gains four.’

“‘ England, informed of our misunderstanding, may perhaps enter on a treaty of commerce, which

deprive us of four hundred thousand livres; and who knows but she may become Catholic, when she learns that we are no longer so. I beg your Lordship to *reflect* on the above project, before you mention it to the King, which he may adopt, from an idea of its utility, and afterwards repent; for by prohibiting species to be carried out of his kingdom in such small quantities, he will prevent the entry of a sum much more considerable. This is what people will not believe; but which is nevertheless the exact truth. &c. &c. &c.”

I feared Mons. de ***, so lately convalescent, might catch cold, in

his beautiful grotto, so took leave,
not without much satisfaction at
the expectation of again seeing
him the next morning.



CHAP. XI.

*Prudent conduct of Pius VI. at the commencement
of the French Revolution.*

II HASTENED my steps towards the grotto where I expected to meet my venerable friend, but was agreeably surprised to find him at the bank of moss. "You see, madam," said he, "that I gain strength, and I have exercised it in coming so far. It was to accelerate our meeting, which never happens soon enough for my wishes.

Were I young, I should think this without daring to say so ; but it is the privilege of old age freely to express sentiments, that can only be founded on perfect esteem, at which true virtue would not take offence."

I was far from doing so, at the good old gentleman's professions. I expressed my gratitude, and begged he would inform me how, during the reign of a Pontiff of so gentle and amiable a disposition, there happened a schism so terrible, and which, perhaps, might have been prevented. "Ah, Madam, it is plain you are little acquainted with the character of those who go-

verned your country at that time. The purity of your soul, cannot admit an idea of the atrocity of their's. Be assured that whatever concessions were made to them they would still demand more, even to a surrender of life. Of this you have seen an example in the unfortunate King of France: Did he not grant every thing, submit to every outrage, and was he not at last led to the scaffold? Pius VI. to have preserved the papal chair, must, like his impious enemies, have denied the existence of a Deity; and then would they have said to him as they did to the miscreant priests, ' Now is your mi-

nistry useless,' and would have banished the Pontiff; as happened in the end; but with this difference, that as nothing could move his truly sublime soul, my friend forfeited the honors of his station, but not his self esteem, nor that of all who examine his conduct with impartiality, throughout a period when a universal contagion seized almost the whole globe, and seemed to replunge the world in the barbarism of former ages.

“ But to answer by facts to what you advanced, that the Pope could have hindered a schism:— Had there been no innovations introduced, under the mild sway of

Louis XVI. France might have for a long time preserved her ancient form of government ; but a change was thought necessary and effected ; a defect was perceived ; and the States-General assembled to remedy it. This was what they were least busied in, yet it served as a pretext to seize on the property of the clergy, and you know how many springs were set at work to accomplish this great purpose.

The higher rank of clergy, possessed of great livings, had for a long time treated their more indigent and laborious brethren, with great haughtiness ; they formed two distinct classes, as the No-

blesse and the Bourgeois ! These personages, dignified in rank and fortune, did not see the necessity of having so large a body of their order; so far superior in society, they thought not of uniting them in their interests; on the contrary, they alienated the inferior clergy by their supercilious demeanour, which was carried so far, that a Prelate possessing a poor diocese was held in little consideration by the more affluent Bishops. Who has not heard of the observation of the Archbishop de ***, who being displeased with his valet, said, ‘What! do you take me for the Bishop of Bazas?’ Such was

the situation of the two higher orders, while the sole intent of the lowest rank of Ecclesiastics was to humble their proud superiors. I shall not enter into a detail of the intrigues of the Noblesse ; that is foreign to my subject, but shall only mention the unfortunate reductions, which were accomplished, at the commencement of the *States-General*. Three hundred and sixty Curates joined the *tiers-etats*, where they found their friends and parents ; hence they meditated the ruin of the high Ecclesiastics, whose benefices they were taught to believe would in part revert to them ; so that

there was not a Curate, with a revenue of five hundred livres, who did not expect an income of at least a thousand crowns.

“What projects did not this pleasing hope give rise to in their imagination! they fancied their humble habitations furnished like the canonical houses in the neighbouring towns; the Curate’s niece did not fail to instigate him to second the views of an assembly, which would set her above working like the females of her village. Ah! how much was their credulity imposed upon! how heartily must they have repented their blind confidence, when the expected

thousand crowns were in fact but seven hundred livres ! which were soon reduced to four hundred, and then to *nothing* ! Adieu to the project of embellishing the habitations, of which they were now deprived ! and the Curate's niece and sister saw themselves obliged to return for a subsistence to those labours, from which they had hoped to be for ever exempt.

“In like manner were a number of people deceived by the specious systems of equality, so much vaunted by our modern philosophers. Might not we have told them the apologue of the Oak and the creeping Shrubs?” The Mar-

quis then gave me the Fable to read.

· APOLOGUE. ·

In a vast Forest, ancient as the world, the Tree revered by the Druids reared its head majestically to the clouds, fearing only the thunder, and affording protection to the humble plants that twined round its trunk, received nourishment from its substance, and flourished beneath its kindly shade; the Nettle, the Bryar, and the Thistle, who shared not this favour, became extremely jealous of the feeble Vine and Honeysuckle, and the whole creeping tribe; and planned their ruin, by

making them instruments of their protector's destruction.

"How is it possible," said the envious Plants to the fragrant Honeysuckle and luxuriant Vine, "that you could not live without the aid of these enormous masses, that drain the juices of the surrounding earth, and deprive us of the genial rays of the sun?" "We are feeble," replied they, "and might perish without these ancient supporters." "An error that—see our stalks, are they not as small as yours? and we dispense with the assistance of these proud guardians. Summon your resolution; and separate from them

as soon as possible, but not until you obtain from Heaven that they should be destroyed, as they would never forgive your having abandoned them."

It was long before the fragrant winders would attend to these perfidious councils; but vanity at last stole into their hearts, and they petitioned Jupiter to level the Oaks with the ground. He heard their prayer in his anger, and the boast of the Forest in their fall crushed the frail Shrubs that had subsisted by their beneficence. While the ungrateful Plants languished on the earth, their treacherous seducers laughed at their

misfortune, and flourished on the sap that had formerly imparted to the Vine, the Honeysuckle and the weak Convolvulis, by those whose downfall they had implored. The Bryer, the Thistle and the Nettle congratulated each other on having caused at once the ruin of their superiors and that of their dependents.

I must own, said I to the Marquis, that if you had not told me this apologue was taken from an ancient author, I should think it had been composed on the French revolution. "Madam, nature is the same in all ages, and revolu-

tions suited to those who have nothing to lose. The *honest* proprietor dreads any change lest it should prove prejudicial to his interests. In fine, it happened to your Curates as to the winding Plants. The former judged the great riches of the Prelates to be superfluous, and they themselves were deprived even of what was *necessary* for their subsistence.

“ Yet those innovations were not introduced all at once ; the constituents wished to establish their reputation, on shaking the prejudices of our forefathers, and began by decreeing that the annats were no longer to be paid to Rome.

They levied this stroke of policy against the Papal chair, imagining it would cause a rupture with the Roman See, which was an important point to their plan. But they were little acquainted with the character of Braschi; too great, too noble to be influenced by pecuniary motives to infringe on that peace and tolerance, which it was his duty to preserve, while his personal interest only was concerned. Yet he might have remonstrated against the suppression of the tithes, which followed that of the annats. This offering of the faithful was regarded by many doctors as a divine right. Their opinion

was founded on scripture, and the right could not with justice be revoked. The tithes were a pledge of gratitude to the Almighty, for the production of the earth. Never was there a more affecting mode of maintaining the Ministers of Religion. It was saying, 'Your prayers procure from Heaven the blessings of life to reward our toil; accept therefore a small share of them.' Besides this impost, like all those *in kind*, were little burthensome to the proprietor, who left the share of his Pastor, in the field, from whence it was brought home by a poor peasant, who by farming tithes maintained his fa-

mily. Thus while the modern philosophers inveighed against the unequal distribution of property, they increased it by decreeing the *whole* crop *without reserve*, to the wealthy farmer, who by that means set what price he pleased on grain and forage ; all profit consequently centered in the rich cultivator, who sowed nothing but wheat, because it was most lucrative. The result was a vast augmentation in the price of provisions ; so that the proprietors, who had gained by the suppression of tithes, were in fact losers, as they were obliged to purchase the *necessaries* of life at an enormous price, and the poor were

ruined. But to finish a digression, into which I was led by the force of truth, I shall return to my illustrious friend.

“Don't you think from the conduct of the Constitutional Assembly,' would he say 'that you see a number of children, trying how far their father's patience will go? They take my silence for obduracy and want of energy, proceeding from what they term *weakness*; but they will be sensible of my firmness of mind, whenever I see the glory of the Church compromised. Hitherto only the perishable goods of this world have been in question, and it would be putting those

in the right, who say that I am more attached to fortune than to the interests of morality. He who sent us into the world without gold or silver, he who had not a stone on which to repose his head, recommended to us an entire abrogation of riches. The piety of the faithful had accumulated great wealth on the French Clergy. It were perhaps to be wished they had been less opulent, or at least that their possessions were more equally distributed. Let us not then interfere in the proceedings of the Assembly, and let us hope that should they attack the discipline dogma, or, which is nearly con-

nected the discipline of the Church, the piety of our dear son the King of France will oppose them. I shall not add to the embarrassment occasioned him at present (by men whose secret machinations he was not aware of) by counteracting plans which are perhaps necessary to acquit the debts of the nation. As long as the foundations of religion are not infringed, I repeat, that I am determined to remain a silent spectator, without blaming or approving what passes in France.'

"Such I can attest were the sentiments my unfortunate friend expressed at the beginning of the French Revolution. Sincerely at-

tached to Louis XVI. from his virtues, the tender heart of Brascchi was rent at the relation of the bloody scenes witnessed by the august Royal Family of France.—‘Good heaven!’ he would exclaim, ‘can they who commit such cruel outrages against Louis XVI. forget, that he never wished but their happiness! Is it his gentleness and humanity, that excite them to overwhelm him with misery and affliction?’ He wrote to the unfortunate Louis the most affecting letters, and incessantly prayed the Almighty to put an end to the *mania* which had seized the French nation; but his vows were not

heard. I shall not enter into particulars of the vexations suffered by the French Monarch; but confine myself to those caused him as eldest Son of the Church.

“The sitting in 1789 filled up the measure of what the men dared, who composed the majority of the National Assembly. The entire possessions of the Clergy were left to the disposal of the nation. That immense extent of property was consigned to the rapacity of those, who wished not so much to exterminate religion, as to seize on the goods of its ministers. Pius VI. was not surprised at this decree; he expected it. ‘I foresee,’ said

he, 'great troubles, but I still persist in being silent.' He only signified his apprehensions, by ordering public prayers for the safety of the Church, . . . This was known in France, and you shall see what was written to me on the subject.

*The Comte de L. to the Marquis de ***.*

“ ‘What you write me, dear Marquis, of the public prayers ordered by the Pope, proves his piety ; but I fear they will not stem the torrent of licentiousness, which menaces the destruction of our most sacred institutions. There was a time when the fear of Vatican thunder would have made more impression. I am of your

opinion, that it is not much dreaded at present, yet it were to be wished some salutary expedient were employed, for we are ruined if we do not take care.

“ You know that my brother the Abbè got a living from the King, of which he is deprived by the new laws; and in its stead is promised a *nominal* pension of *one thousand livres* per annum; and I lose the fruit of the many privations I had made to procure the Abbè a comfortable establishment, which also served to support the Chevalier. Thus am I again obliged to provide for my brothers. Were I swayed merely by motives of interest, I

should have the greatest reason to wish an end to this abuse of power, which crushes all beneath its weight. Don't you think an association, similar to a Crusade, might be of utility? Pray mention it to the Sovereign Pontiff. The Nobles would doubtless be glad to join in a measure so congenial with their interest, which they cannot separate from the higher rank of Clergy.

“‘I am, &c. &c. &c.’

“I shewed this letter to the Pope. His answer was, ‘Has your friend then lost his wits? To what purpose a proposal of that nature? We are not in the times when these pious invitations were

regarded as orders; and were they still, should I give them? Alas! too much blood has already been shed since the troubles in France! Could I, in the name of a religion of peace, command the sword to be drawn against those who have the misfortune to be in error? Your friend's zeal appears indiscreet, the motive of his vexation is too easily seen. He seems more affected by the family loss of forty thousand livres than for the interests of the Church. The loss was certainly very great, but can it bear a comparison with misfortunes of so much greater importance, or be mentioned with propriety, when

we see the places of worship abandoned, and the faith forgotten, which must happen when the Ministers of Religion are no longer able to celebrate her mysteries with becoming splendour. Are not these more dreadful evils? You will see, my friend, that men in general, who are only affected by what strikes their senses, will cease to follow a mode of worship stript of its accustomed pomp. In the primitive ages of Christianity, subterraneous places unadorned, the sacred stone placed on the body of a martyr, vases of rustic ware, sufficed for the devotion of the faithful; but let it be remembered,

that they attended these meetings clandestinely : that there was a degree of heroism in appearing at them, as in case of surprise, there was no interval between the altar and the scaffold. It is plain the first Christians needed not other sensations than the glory of bearing danger. But at present when Churches are attended, unaccompanied by fear, awful magnificence of worship, sweet odours and sublime harmony are necessary to fill the heart with devout enthusiasm. What contributions can in future be expected from the faithful, who may say, what we bestow on the Church, may be one day taken by

the State, as we now see the donations of our forefathers? Hence we have reason to regard the forfeiture of ecclesiastical property as a mortal wound given to religion. But I do not complain, as I before observed, lest the undevout should conclude that I regretted opulence as the end and not the means.

“The Constitutional Assembly soon gave the Court of Rome new subject of discontent in uniting le Contat d’Avignon to France, with alleging no other reason than that of the strongest, which in fact was the only one they could give, or which was understood at that period. They always confounded the *Pontiff* with the Sovereign of Rome.

“ The Pope became an object of derision to the French banditti, and were he in their power, they would doubtless have treated him as Pilate’s soldiers did our Lord Jesus Christ, and would have changed his Tiera to a crown of thorns ; but as that was not the case, they thought themselves entitled to invade the beautiful country of Avignon, which experienced all the horrors of a French revolution. My friend’s heart was wrung with affliction at hearing the cruel details. Too impotent to revenge this hostility, he wrote to all the Christian Princes, to state his grievances, representing that the usurpation of

his territories was the common cause of all Sovereigns. But whether from indifference for a Prince whose fate they saw already decided, or being too much occupied, about their own interests to attend to those of another, the seemed to heed not whether the county of Avignon passed into the hands of the French government, or remained in the possession of the Pope. Not so with Braschi—the people of Avignon had been confided to his care by the Sovereign of the Universe ; to whom he must one day render an account of the trust reposed in him. What would be their fate, if aban-

doned by the Holy See? Was it not his duty to declare against the injustice which separated them from it? He wrote to the French King, who made him understand in his answer, that he enjoyed no longer but the *shadow* of liberty, and was in consequence obliged to sanction the law known by the title of *Constitution civile du Clergé*, a composition worthy of those who framed it; in which they pretended not to have attached any dogma of the catholic religion, whilst they absolved from their vows its sacred ministers. Ignorant people might be deceived, by seeing the same exterior form of worship; but those

who were better informed, plainly perceived the annihilation of all discipline, and the interruption of the hierarchy. It was no longer possible for the Pope to remain a silent spectator of these proceedings, for from the time the constitutional oath was proposed to the Clergy of France, two parties arose in that kingdom; those who opposed the law, requested Pius VI. to declare, whether it was consistent with the Canons of the Church? Thus was the mildest of Pontiffs obliged to separate from his communion, those who had long ceased to look upon him as the successor of St. Peter, who imagined they did not

want his authority to govern their decrees, and only made him *acquainted* with their nominations by letter, I shall not repeat what I have already said on the subject. The bull of excommunication circulated with difficulty in France. Those whose interest it was, made false bulls to deceive the people, and circulated them in great numbers; wherein it was pretended that the Pope seemed to adhere to the work of the Constitutional Assembly.

“The King who knew the real state of these proceedings, was extremely concerned to see himself at variance with the See of Rome

which he respected, and particularly with Pius VI. whom he regarded as the worthiest of men. It is certain there was no rupture between these Princes, who ever entertained a mutual love and esteem, as they knew how to appreciate each other's merit. Rome was the asylum chosen by his Majesty's aunts to preserve the purity of the faith handed to them by their ancestors. But you will permit me to defer an account of their interview with Pius VI. till tomorrow. I have formed the project of making you a visit to thank your amiable family for their kind attention during my illness."

I insisted on his not taking that trouble, but he assured me his physician had prescribed exercise. I then consented, saying I should expect him in the bower of lilac.

CHAP. XII.

*Arrival of the King's Aunts in Italy. Sequel of
the troubles in that country.*

THE Marquis was punctual to his promise. He found my family assembled in the harbour to receive him. I ordered a collation, which he partook of, with as much satisfaction as I offered it. After some time given to mutual professions of friendship, and congratulations on his recovery, our friend thus continued his recital:

“You know what persuasions Madam Adelaide made use of to induce her royal nephew, not to let himself be guided by the perfidious councils of those who, under the pretext of the *people's happiness*, established the disorganizing system, which must involve the ruin of the reigning family. This Princess was endowed with great penetration of character, had long foreseen and warned the King of what we have since seen come to pass. When I had the honor of being introduced to her Royal Highness at Rome, she regretted having expressed herself with too much moderation, fearing, as she

owned, the impetuosity of her disposition. 'Were the King, my nephew *sensible* of the *cause* of the evils, which overwhelm him, he would mark his displeasure in a terrible manner, to the authors of his misfortunes.' The consciousness that her exertions were of no service to the welfare of her family, was one of the reasons that determined Madame Adelaide to quit France. . She thought it more expedient to kindle the paternal zeal of Pius VI. in favour of the King, than to devote herself, like Madame Elizabeth to share his afflictions; a proof of attachment which led that magnanimous and

most unfortunate Princess to the scaffold. Besides it appeared that Louis XVI. wished all the Bourbon family to quit France that he might have to fear the stroke of adverse fate but for himself alone. How often did he intreat the Queen and his sister to fly a country where vice and inhumanity warred against all that was virtuous and amiable. But these heroic Princesses, from attachment and a sense of their duty, could never be prevailed on to forsake the unfortunate Monarch. The daughters of Louis XV. had not the same motives, and complied immediately with the will of their

nephew. They set off from *Ballucia*, where they lived for some time in a kind of imprisonment; they pursued their rout with much difficulty, and were actually *stopped* at a town in Burgundy, where they were informed, they should give up all their travelling equipage, before they had permission to continue their journey; and one Gorsas, who (in the lampoons of the day) is made to address these virtuous Princesses in the most indecent language, pretended that no part of the Royal Family's property belonged to them. Poor Gorsas forgot that the Dukes of France before they mounted the throne of

that kingdom, were masters of the most extensive possessions in the country, and that the Madames inherited from their grandfather the King of Poland. Consequently, a few *trunks*, which followed their coach, were their property, whatever Mr. Gorsas may say on the subject.

“The Princesses at last arrived at Rome, and were received by the Head of the Church, as the descendants of so many Kings, who had given the Papal Chair such repeated marks of respectful attachment. How consoling to these Royal ladies to find in Pius VI. the sincerest friend ! ‘As long

as the herd of tygers that over-run France, shall allow me to remain in peace,' said he, 'your Royal Highnesses are Sovereigns here.' 'We seek not for honors, far from our native country. Alas! we only seek consolation, and prayer that we may obtain from Heaven that which we stand so much in need of.'

"Notwithstanding, the French Princesses received the sincerest homage at Rome, and could they have forgot the misfortunes of their august family, they had found themselves happy with my friend, whose cultivated and amiable mind was so consonant to that

of Madame Adelaide, the most accomplished Princess of the age.

“ This noble lady and her sister Madame Victoire, had so long lived retired from the dissipation of the court, that the small, but well-chosen circle, who paid their compliments at Rome, served to divert their minds in some measure from misfortune. I had sometimes the honor of being admitted into these societies. With what avidity any news was received there, which gave the least hope of a change in affairs ! There also were related all the enormities caused by the spirit of anarchy and irreligion. I could not behold without compassion,

the descendants of more than thirty Kings reduced to beg an asylum, from a Prince, whose power consisted entirely in opinion, which justly regarded him as the Father of Christians; but this opinion no longer existed in France, or those who held, were obliged to dissolve it, at the peril of their lives. Hence this was a feeble barrier; it had however sufficed, if the leaders of French faction had not declared war in the King's name. It seemed as if the ferocious wretches contained in France waited this event to disperse over all Europe, endeavouring by

their intrigues to subvert all government. From this time all was fear and suspicion. There were Sovereigns wrongfully aspersed, for having like Pius VI. taken severe precautions to prevent the introduction of revolutionary principles into their dominions. Is not there an instinctive warning given even to the brute creation against their destroyers? Does not the lamb fly the wolf, and the dove shun the falcon? Why then should not Kings banish those whose aim was the destruction of all civil institutions, and whose glory, to erect in their stead, trophies of human bones—those who did not blush

to form a corps, under the shameful denomination the *Tyrannicide*—those who declared the name of King and Tyrant synonymous. Was it not natural to fear every Frenchman had been enrolled under the standard of iniquity? Can Pius VI. be arraigned for having endeavored to prevent the dissemination of principles, equally contrary to his temporal and spiritual interest? For the Jacobins had sworn in their hearts the annihilation of that church, whose minister he was; as if the clay could destroy the potter, who formed it. The event has proved that my friend's fears were but too well founded;

fortunate was he not to have fallen into the hands of the satellites of Robespierre, who would have dragged him to Paris, and there massacred him on the same scaffold, as Louis XVI. The venerable Pontiff might return thanks to Providence at least, that the French army did not invade Italy, during the reign of the system of terror.

“ But how much did my friend suffer, at the situation of the French clergy ! among whom, all were either culpable, or the victims of barbarity. With what compassion did he not treat those, who could arrive at the capital of the christian world ! and how much

did he regret not being possessed of immense treasures, to snatch from misery those who had given up all for the degurus of their faith. But alas! the revenues of a Prince, who levied so few taxes, could not be considerable. To succour those unfortunate men, he was obliged to relinquish all his personal expences: He caused the researches in Otricoli to be suspended; he kept up only his museum; and restraining the dearest affections of his heart, he no longer permitted himself to bestow on his nephews, or the amiable Duchess Constanza, any marks of his generous tenderness.

The amount of these retrenchments was destined for the support of the indigent French Clergy, who had emigrated to Rome. 'I did not expect,' said the benevolent Pontiff one day to me, 'to have in my old age, such a numerous family to provide for. I really feel for these worthy brethren of the faith, the sentiments of a parent; and I daily pray the Almighty to preserve to me the little power I enjoy, that I may be able to procure them, if not happiness, peace and repose.'

"It seemed as if the sensibility which characterizes the prime of life, had increased with years, in

the heart of Braschi. Whenever he received dispatches from Paris, the characters which traced each cruel intelligence, were bathed in tears. But when he learnt with what resignation the sublime Louis XVI. had refused to sanction the decree, which condemned the refractory Priests to banishment or death, he said to a Frenchman near, 'Ah ! could you read in my heart, what I feel for your Monarch ! May Heaven one day recompence him for what he suffers for the Ministers of Religion !' Louis XVI. received not his recompence in this world. But it will not be refused him in the next, by

the God of all Justice, and the vows of my friend will be fulfilled in the eternal mansions above.

“The consoling news of July the 5th, from Paris, excited hopes of a happier futurity to France. The rage of the party chiefs, at being disappointed in their intentions, and the joys of all well disposed persons, at the firmness manifested by the King; the confidence it had inspired, especially in the departments, (the greatest number of whom sent to compliment him, with assurances of their unshaken fidelity)—all seemed to announce a new order of things. Mesdames Adelaide and Victoire

ordered a *Te Deum* in token of thanks; their palace was illuminated, also the houses of the emigrants; they were yet lulled with the most pleasing expectations, when the dispatches of July 14, brought news of an alarming nature. Their prospects began to darken; but the King was not assassinated at the federal feast, an event to be feared in the present disposition of the people, which had on a sudden entirely changed, at least of those men, whose *very thoughts receive pay*, and the number of such men is great in a city like Paris. The joy of the emigrant was changed to mourning.

“What are undone,” said Madame Adelaide, “since my nephew’s courageous resistance has been ineffectual, I know his character; he will resign himself to the course of events, and no longer defend those rights which are continually disputed, nor that life, which he could never hope to pass in tranquility. I have a sad presentiment, that we approach the fatal crisis, at which we shall see the total subversion of French Monarchy.”

“The horrid catastrophe of the 10th of August proves how well Madame Adelaide was acquainted with the disposition of her nephew, and of the men who were to govern

Francis. Her grief and that of her sister was heart rending, and heightened, if possible, by the torture of incertitude. They learnt that the King had quitted with his family the palace of his ancestors, at a moment when he should have resolved to be buried under its ruins, or oppose force to force, but they were yet ignorant of what the assembly (now suddenly become a formidable tribunal) had decided with regard to his fate.

“Yet nothing good could be augured, from the barbarous joy testified by the *Roman Patriots*, for so the French called those men, who meditated the overthrow of all the

governments in Europe. Those monsters, who declared that Louis XVI. *had reigned*, and should cease to live. Who can describe the affliction of the King's aunts, when this news reached them? The holy Pontiff had vainly essayed by reasoning to sooth their grief. The cause was too just, and it was only by recommending them to address themselves for comfort to him who had suffered an *ignominious death* for the redemption of mankind, that he found any consolation for ~~these~~ miserable Princesses, whose sensibility was equal to their misfortunes.

“‘Lament,’ he said, ‘my dear

daughters; the fate of France, and that of your relative, whose virtues might have constituted her felicity; but adore the decrees of Providence, who punishes secret faults by public chastisements; and who is it that can boast himself exempt from sin? Hitherto you have only known prosperity; it was Providence that placed you in the most distinguished rank, surrounded by the pomp and pleasures of a Court. The moment of trial is now arrived. It is, I own, *terrible*; but the greater your fortitude, the greater the reward due to your resignation.

“ Nobody possessed, in a higher

degree than my illustrious friend; the eloquence of the heart; he poured the balm of consolation into the wounded bosoms of these august sufferers. "Oh! you, who have condemned your late King to wait in the gloomy tower the decision of your sanguinary tribunal, on his fate and that of his consort and children, have pity at least on the scattered remnants of his family! Permit the daughters of Louis XV. to end their days near a venerable Pontiff! Consider that they have not many years to number. Has age no empire over your ferocious souls? The old, feeble as the infant, join to the inability

of defending themselves from the evils that overwhelm them, the remembrance of better days, which renders their situation still more deplorable. Do not separate those whom misfortune has united—what can ye fear from a Pontiff bent under the weight of years—from women, whom affliction and change of climate have brought to the feeblest state of caducity? Do not destroy what of itself hastens to decay.’ Such was the discourse I held with the barbarous men, who dared to anticipate the news of the project of the propagande—they no longer concealed it, from the time the intelligence arrived.

of the King's dethronement, and his being imprisoned with his family in the temple.

“Had Braschi been possessed of power sufficient, he had not hesitated to fly to the defence of the unfortunate Monarch ; but he had every thing to fear from those who had not respected their legitimate Prince ; so did every day bring accounts of new crimes. Who has not trembled at the recital of the horrors committed on the 2d of September? Lamballe ! thy innocent manes will pursue those who *coolly* imagined thy death, and hurl them into the lowest depth of Hell. How many victims fell

beneath the hands of those human butchers ! but their fury was principally against the Clergy, of whom but a small number escaped. You have not, perhaps, heard the affecting story of the Bishop of Beauvais,* who was shut up with his brother in the Abbaye.

“The Bishop’s valet de chambre had procured an uniform of the national guards, which he brought his master to effect his escape, as it was known that all who were confined there would be massacred. ‘Have you brought one for my brother?’ ‘No, my Lord.’ ‘Then it is useless, for I

* La Rochefaucault, Bayette.

promised not to forsake him; and had rather die than break my word.' And that night the two brothers were murdered in each other's arms. I knew them well; they were (as formerly those of the family) good, unaffected, and of exemplary manners. I paid the tribute of a tear to their fate, as well as that of those who perished on that dreadful day. But the emigrants and their friends had soon new subject of alarm; Louis XVI. was brought to his trial; imagine the agony of mind with which the Princesses, his aunts, waited the arrival of the express which was to contain the result of

the strange prosecution, in which the first and best of Kings consented to be judged by those who had been his subjects.

“At last the moment arrived, which filled up the measure of their woes. Pius VI. had desired that all the French dispatches should be first brought to him, in order to spare the sensibility of the Princesses as much as possible, by communicating the news himself of the expected catastrophe. For this purpose he repaired to their palace *incognito*, and reading in the eyes of the unfortunates, that mournful perturbation, which dares not interrogate, for fear of

hearing what it dreads to learn, His tears were the only interpreters of his feelings. On observing these tokens of affliction, Madame Adelaide no longer doubted that the King's life was terminated. She was seized with a sudden trembling; her face became of a livid paleness, and her limbs grew stiff with horror. The Pontiff alarmed at the dreadful situation of the unhappy Princess, turned to her sister Madame Victoire to assist her, (for the attendants had retired through respect on his entrance;) Madame Victoire was equally affected. Pius VI. was obliged himself to call the la-

dies in waiting ; who hastened to the relief of the Royal Sisters ; they were fallen into a swoon. When they had recovered from this dismal state, the benign Pontiff, knowing that religion alone could alleviate evils so irremediable, re-entered their apartment, and spoke words of divine consolation ;— he displayed the realms above to their imagination, where they saw Louis XVI. arrayed in all the splendour of celestial brightness ; and the certainty of his happiness, who was so dear to them, calmed the violence of their grief.

“ When Pius VI. thought the Princesses were able to support

the sight of funereal pomp in honor of Louis, he invited them to the Vatican Chapel, where he celebrated a mass, for the repose of a soul, so pure that one should rather think of making vows *to* than *for* it.

“The death of Louis XVI. was the signal of new disasters ; the western provinces of France were now a prey to the horrors of civil war. Some calumniators did not scruple to assert that the Pope headed the army denominated Royal Catholic ; and when its chiefs encouraged this opinion to gain the country people over to their interest from religious motives .

(not reflecting that a lie dishonours the best cause) they dared to nominate the Bishop of Egra apostolic vicar, and this Prelate, who was not of more canonical institution, than the constitutional Bishops, dispersed false briefs, wherein he sanctioned superstitious ideas then current, one of which was, that the inhabitants of La Vendée who were killed, with arms in hand, should rise again in three days.— They must have been ignorant of the character and enlightened understanding of Braschi, to pretend that he circulated ridiculous fables.

“He wrote in the strongest terms to the Chiefs of La Vendée, repre-

senting how far they were from accomplishing their design, by giving the title and functions of a Bishop to a man who was not even consecrated. 'It was,' interrupted I, 'by craft and cruelty, that they destroyed their cause. The shocking scenes the provinces have witnessed are not to be imagined.' 'Nothing can be compared to the barbarous excesses of the republicans,' said Mons. de *****, 'except an anecdote I shall tell you, dear Marquis, which is an incontestible fact.

"An officer of the republican army was ordered into La Vendée, where he behaved with courage

and humanity; but he met with such success, that the Vandean's had given up all hope; this was enough to kindle their eternal animosity. What renders civil wars more dreadful than hostilities between men of different nations is, that in the latter, after an action is over, the contending soldiers often meet without enmity, whereas in civil wars the termination of a battle is not that of mutual detestation. Those who were once friends, are ever enemies the most implacable, and can only assuage their vengeance but by the perpetration of the most atrocious crimes.

“That committed by the Vandéans, which threw M. F. in the deepest affliction, is so horrid that the authenticity of the story has been doubted.—He had a son, who was confided to the care of a peasant to suckle, his mother being too delicate to undertake that occupation. The innocent infant was not above six months old. A party of Vandéans having entered his nurse’s cottage to refresh themselves, asked her if he was her child? ‘O no,’ replied the peasant, ‘it is M. F.’s son.’ No sooner had she pronounced the name, than the tigers snatched the infant, and slaughtered him

at the feet of his hapless nurse.—

This story is most shocking, I allow, but dont you think the royalists have many such instances of savage barbarity to reproach the republicans? The melancholy details received at Rome of these enormities, made so deep an impression on the compassionate Braschi, that a sensible alteration in his health was observed, and hence I may date the infirmities which rendered him incapable of holding the reins of government alone. Many events then happened before his eyes, which he would have prevented could he have made a personal exertion of his authority.

“ Of this number was the assassination of M. de Buseville, who fell a victim to a popular insurrection. This crime had not been committed, had my friend's health permitted him (as I have before remarked) to show himself to the Romans, who respected and loved him. Those who accused him of secretly abetting the above murder, forgot the humanity he constantly manifested during the course of the war. A thousand instances could be given to prove how averse he was to shed the blood of his fellow creatures : and that on the contrary, he was disposed to treat even those who

fought against him, with amity ; of this, his conduct on the following occasion is a striking example:

“ In the month of July, 1795, he learnt that a French brig, endeavouring to escape the pursuit of two Neapolitan vessels, had been wrecked on a coast, in his states ; the unfortunate crew without succour or asylum wandered among the woods. Moved by their miserable situation, the Pontiff not only afforded them relief, but ordered their ship to be repaired, and sent them off under an escort to a certain distance.— This generous action was blackened by his enemies ; who doubt-

less found reason, in their own hearts, to conclude, that virtue was a fiction. Pius VI. in their opinion was a hypocrite, who disguised under such appearances of liberality of sentiment, his secret fear and aversion.

“ Braschi evinced the amenity of his disposition when the spirit of licentiousness reached Rome, which became a scene of continual riots; during one of which, the Duchess Orresti, whom he so much loved, was near losing her life from extreme terror. The Holy Father never would oppose force to these insurrections; similar to Louis XVI. in that respect, he sa-

crificed his personal safety, to that of the State, and his horror for bloodshed. This was the man accused of meditating the murder of the republicans. Yet the assassination of M. de Buseville, was the signal of a deadly war between the French and Pius VI. who, it was resolved, should be robbed of his temporal power.

“ At this period, the Republican army entered Italy ; their success was at first impeded ; but the army, commanded by Buonaparte, ravaged the country with dreadful rapidity. Bologna, Terara, and Ancona submitted.—Rome was filled with consternation. The Pope had

recourse to the Chevalier Azara, the Spanish Ambassador, whose republican principles rendered an eligible mediator in the present crisis. He obtained a truce; but on such severe conditions, that Pius VI. could not more dearly purchase the little authority allowed him by the treaty; which was soon broken. Yet one should suppose the payment of fifteen millions, (an enormous sum for so indigent a state) the loss of the legislation of Terara and Bologna, the stimulation to send the finest pictures and statues of his museum into France, was reparation sufficient to atone for the imaginary

crimes, with which my illustrious friend was charged.

“ But it was thought the Papal power was not sufficiently humbled. Letters were forged, and put into the hands of Buonaparte, that *seemed to indicate* a desire to conspire against France; which that commander thought sufficient provocation to declare the truce at an end; and he marched directly for Rome.

“ As he approached the city, (says an author whose words I shall here employ) Mattei, the Archbishop of Rome, mounted the pulpit to warn his flock against the seduction of French republi-

can principles. He delivered an affecting discourse; the purport of which was, that they should remain faithfully attached to their religion, and to the government transmitted to them by their ancestors. For this exertion of his duty, Buonaparte ordered the Cardinal to be thrown into prison, after receiving a reprimand. The next day, he was brought before the Commander, who reproached him for his temerity: the Prelate listened with christian humility.—Buonaparte, after holding the language of a general, addressed him in that of a statesman—‘Whatever may be your grievances, I offer

means of redress. I afford you the finest and most glorious opportunity that a citizen can have, that of saving your country and your sovereign. Go to Rome, represent to the Pope his danger, and the folly of ineffectual obstinacy.—Mattei, flattered with the confidence reposed in him, joyfully accepted the commission. He was a man simple in his manners; upright and candid; sincerely attached to a religion, whose precepts he followed with the most scrupulous exactitude; ambition, luxury, or avarice, had not corrupted his heart; his conduct called to mind the virtues and zeal

of the apostles, and the primitive members of the church. It was to his pathetic intreaties that Buonaparte accorded the preservation of Rome. He wrote to him to send a plenipotentiary to Togliano, whom he should meet there. The negotiation was held at Zolentino. The Pope sent Louis de Braschi, his nephew, and the Marquis Camille Massini, to treat with Buonaparte; but these gentlemen were only sent for form, the real negotiators were Cardinals Mattei and Monsignor Galleppi.

“The conditions proposed by the French general, were such as

must revolt those who did not consider the situation of the ecclesiastical state. Buonaparte, who did not understand losing time in conferences, and did not expect long deliberations upon the terms he chose to dictate, finished the negotiation, by these words—If to-morrow you accept not my propositions, I march to Rome. The following day, Cardinal Mattei waited on the general to assure him of his submission and that of his colleague. The articles were signed, and Buonaparte took the road to Vienna.

“ My unfortunate friend, after such concessions, might hope to

enjoy in tranquillity the little power that remained to him; but it was written, that for him there was neither *happiness nor peace*. Permit me, Madam, to suspend here my melancholy narration. The remembrance of the misfortunes suffered by the friend of my youth oppresses me."

We requested the Marquis would not so soon return to his retreat; and obtained his consent to prolong his visit until he had finished the recital of his illustrious sovereign's misfortunes.

CHAP. XII.

*Pius VI. obliged to quit Rome, and conducted
into France.*

“**I** CAN now, Madam, (continued the Marquis) relate the sufferings of Pius VI.

“The glory of his Pontificate is eclipsed, in the eye of the world, and you will soon see him deprived of his rank, fortune, and liberty ; but never can he lose the respectful admiration of foreigners, and the love of his virtuous subjects.

Nothing can give an idea of the troubles that agitated the patrimony of St. Peter. The Italians are naturally attached to their institutions, especially those which regard religion. They knew too well the French philosophic opinions, and they thought it meritorious to oppose the impious wretches, who came to pillage their holy city. Pius VI. was far from countenancing these sanguinary excesses. It was not his interest to irritate a conqueror, who would seize the shadow of a grievance to annihilate the little power that remained to the successor of St. Peter.

“An opportunity much wished

by the innovators at last happened. The unfortunate Pontiff languished between life and death for two months; his family and friends continually surrounded his bed of sorrow, and took particular care that he should remain ignorant of the fermentation that reigned in the city. Alas! could we have the cruelty to increase the sufferings, physical and moral, with which this venerable man was overwhelmed? Could we inform him that his capital was abandoned to the influence of those disorganizing societies, known by the name of jacobin clubs? Or what could it avail to inform him, that Rome would

soon become a prey to the horrors produced by these associations in France, in Holland, and in all countries, where the Jacobins could corrupt the public opinion, which they pretended to direct? Was it necessary to make him acquainted with evils, which his infirm state of health made it impossible for him to remedy? Should not Government have sought to quell these disturbances, without communicating to the Pope information, the news of which might at such a time prove of dangerous consequence to him? I therefore attest that the Pontiff was wholly unacquainted with the transactions

at Rome two months previous to the 28th of December, 1797, that ever fatal day, when the sword of General Duphot hurled the unfortunate Pontiff from his throne. Scarce had the Roman troops committed this act of hostility, when they were seized with dread, for this man had only defended those of his own nation, whom he had engaged to protect.

The French ambassador* complained bitterly of this mighty outrage (of which my friend was unjustly accused).—He set off immediately for Florence ; from whence he sent a pathetic relation to Paris, of the assassination of his friend

* Joseph Buonaparte.

The minds of the people then were too much indisposed against the Chief of a religion, which it was the interest of their government at that time to decry, not to listen with applause to the ambassador's eloquence. The Directory sent orders immediately to General Berthier to march to Rome. He traversed the Pope's dominions, without meeting any resistance, and stopped at the gates of Rome, because the conquest of that city did not please his vanity ; he waited for the patriots to come out to meet him ; yet happy that he did not (by the will of the Directory) make of the present Romans, a

Brutus, a Cincinnatus, and a Scipio, who would have revived, with the sacred love of their country, that thirst for conquest, which made them masters of the world, and would have now conducted them into France, as formerly into Gaul. But luckily Jacobins were too unlike the great men in the splendid days of the Roman republic, to fear this pretended resurrection, which was confined to a theatrical representation, where General Berthier appeared at the capitol as pacificator.

“The Sovereign Pontiff was required to give his assent to all that was proposed concerning the rege-

neration of Rome. My unfortunate friend, oppressed with age and infirmities, and fearing that the least resistance would occasion all the evils and horrors of French barbarity, consented to all, and ceasing to be Sovereign, aspired to no other glory than that of remaining visible Chief of the Church. Yet his destitution had not yet been officially signified ; shut up in his palace, a great number of the clergy, the Countess and her family, and myself endeavoured, by the most assiduous and respectful attention, to soothe his chagrin at the insolence of those who seemed to make no account of one

who since his promotion had treated them with unceasing beneficence. But it seemed that the most prominent feature in the character of revolutionists was ingratitude.

“ Nevertheless, the anniversary of the Pope’s installation was celebrated with great pomp and solemnity, the 15th of February, 1798. Pius VI. received the compliments of the sacred college with his usual affability; but scarce had he entered his apartments, when the new Rulers, whose jealousy was doubtless excited by the marks of respect shewn to the Pontiff, signified to him the abolition of his tem-

poral authority. The Pontiff raised his eyes to Heaven, joined his hands, and adored the decree of Providence, which tried his resignation by such a cruel reverse of fortune. His guards were changed for French soldiers, so that he now saw himself a prisoner among his enemies. It was then that General Berthier ordered him to be presented with the national cockade by General Cervoni, who desired him to wear this new ornament. 'I know no other uniform for me than that with which the church has honored me ; you have full power over my body, but my soul is beyond your attempts. I

ask no pension ; a stick instead of a crosier, and a simple habit are sufficient for him who must expire beneath the axe or at the stake. I adore the hand of the Almighty, who punishes the shepherd and the flock. You may destroy the habitations of the living and the mansions of the dead ; but religion is eternal ; it existed before and will exist after you, and her reign shall endure throughout all ages.'

"Thus finished the temporal power of the Popes, by the hands of the French, whose ancestors had laid the foundation of it 1043 years before.*

* History civil polit, and relig. of Pius VI. p. 340.

“Seals were put on the galleries and museums, the French republic reserving the *chef d'œuvres* contained therein. ‘To what purpose,’ said my unfortunate friend, ‘have I gathered these superb collections with so much care? To be transported to a foreign land! and by uniting so many curiosities, I shall have only rendered their transmission easier to my enemies! But I hope they will at least spare my private library; it is my last and only pleasure.’ Yet twelve thousand crowns offered by a bookseller (not a sixth part of their value) tempted those who calculate a revolution by the bags of money it will produce, to

sell this collection. Braschi supported this injustice with resignation, and the more as General Berthier had given him to understand that his spiritual power should not be attacked, that the new government would enable him to live according to the rank he occupied, and that he should be allowed guards at the expence of the republic. Such were the intentions of the French government, or General Berthier interpreted them so as not to overwhelm with misery a virtuous, venerable personage. But after the General's departure, licentious wretches, who seized on the government, fearing the respect of

the Romans for Pius VI. would increase, by the sight of his sufferings, resolved to drive him from Rome like the Tarquins.

“This similitude to ancient Rome seemed wanting to complete their regenerated republic. ‘What would our brethren at Paris think, (said they) if there was not a Brutus amongst us?’ There *was* found a Brutus amongst them, in the revolutionary acceptation of the name. One evening as we sat in the oratory of Pius VI. the party consisting of his intimate friends, the Countess, and her daughter, the Duke, the Cardinal, nephew, and myself; Braschi calling to

mind his juvenile years, said 'The purple with which you, my good madam, wished me adorned, the Tiara, of which the possession justly appeared to you the pinnacle of ecclesiastical honor—to what have they conducted me? Perhaps to a crown of martyrdom. But own that it was not *entirely* in a religious view of this nature that you solicited for me the suffrages of Rome. Had I remained in my office of treasurer, I should not be to-day the sport of faction.' 'Alas!' replied the Countess, 'if you accuse me with other views than those of eternity in my exertions for your elevation, the republicans have re-

paired my fault by reducing you to a spiritual jurisdiction. But since they have left you amongst us, and that we may render you our constant attention, we shall not complain.' Scarce had she finished these words, when there entered a commissary from the new government, who thus addressed the Pope: 'The Roman Republic commands you to deliver up your treasures; remit them instantly to me.' 'Alas!' answered Pius VI. 'the treaty of Tolentino has already deprived me of them; I have no treasure to give up.' 'You have got two fine rings.' The Pope took off one and presented it

to the savage—‘ I can dispose of that ; the other is to belong to my successor.’ He insisted on having the other also, which served as a seal to the possessor of the papal chair. The ruffian did not, however, get a rich booty by this last act of brutality, for unquestionably the last ring was of no great value, since it was returned the next day. The commissary, casting his eye round the apartments, perceived a small box, which he judged was full of diamonds and other precious jewels ; he opened it with avidity, and found the contents consisted of dried sweetmeats for the Pope’s dessert, which he took possession of, and retired with his spoil.

Having met some Prelates in the anti-chamber, he said, 'We don't want him here any longer. I desire you inform him to get ready to depart at six o'clock to-morrow morning.*'

"Nobody would consent to announce this odious command, and the commissary was obliged himself to fulfil his mission. We had remained filled with consternation at the cruel treatment offered to a worthy Pontiff; but when the commissary intimated his departure, we felt a pang not to be expressed. The ladies declared their wish not to be separated from him;

* History civil, polit. and relig. of Pius VI. p. 343.

they revered and loved him as a father. We at first thought that the remonstrances of the Pope's family would induce the commissary to revoke his order. Fallacious hopes! All they could obtain was, that Pius VI. should be allowed 24 hours longer to prepare for his exile. How cruel were those hours which preceded the moment that my unhappy friend was obliged to leave his palace, and separate from the dearest objects of his affection! The tenderest friendship united him to the Countess, and her daughter the Duchess Braschi; he sincerely loved his nephews; and the cardinals, who were members of the go-

vernment, and had so long partook of his solicitude for the safety of the State, shared his attachment.

“The officers and domestics of the palace, who had so often experienced his bounty, could not support the idea of his departing without them. The commissaries were besieged with petitions of those who prepared to follow him. The illustrious exile found it necessary to exert the influence he still retained over his friends, to persuade them that such proofs of attachment might awaken the suspicion of government, who might perhaps repay, with the loss of liberty or life, a zeal which was a tacit re-

proach to its conduct towards him. He supplicated them not to add to his suffering, the affliction (a thousand times more acute) of their danger. ‘My dear Countess,’ said the worthy Pontiff, to her whose friendship had been the charm of his life, ‘we must have parted; would not death soon prescribe that hard law? I leave you my family, which is become yours; make use of your authority with my nephews to prevent their committing any acts of imprudence. This moment of perturbation will soon pass away; I shall be no more; but I shall live in the descendants of your children. Let religion be your consola-

tion ; and let the remembrance of our constant friendship enable you to support with less chagrin, a separation which, I believe, will lead to my death.'

"The Countess could make no answer ; her's was mute, unutterable woe ; and her silence seemed that of the grave, by the melancholy which overspread her countenance.

"Pius VI. felt all that a man at an advanced age, on being thus tyrannically deprived of rank, property and friends must experience ; added to this, he was agitated by the continual solicitude of a Prince, who leaves a people he

had always cherished. A circumstance still more distressing to his soul increased his affliction; he saw himself visible Head of the Church, which he was obliged to abandon to the machinations of the impious. This thought alone was sufficient to fill his heart with the bitterest anguish; but putting his confidence in God, he flattered himself that the Almighty would not be always irritated against his people, and that he would be finally reconciled to them. The Pontiff beheld with an eye of faith what we see come to pass, *that the Church should not perish.*

“ He employed the two days pre-

vious to his departure, in regulating, as much as was in his power, ecclesiastical affairs; as to temporal concerns, he found himself dispensed from all attention, thanks to the commissaries, who had plundered him of every thing. His relations, however, supplied his exigencies, as far as the short space of time that elapsed before his leaving them would permit. He knew it, and intended to express his gratitude at the moment of setting off; but the uneasiness of government (an uneasiness natural to all power founded on injustice and cruelty) allowed the commissaries no repose until my illustrious friend had quit-

ted a city, where his virtues gave him more influence, than they could hope from their crimes.

“All those who determined to accompany the Pope did not quit the Vatican for fear of a surprise. I was of the number, resolved rather to die with my Sovereign than leave him an instant. Sleep had fled the eyes of the unfortunate Braschi ; before the rising of Aurora, he could no longer taste repose, having passed the night in the cruelest agitation ; he ordered himself to be carried into his chapel, where his chaplain celebrated mass. With what fervour did the holy Pontiff unite his prayers, to

implore from the Giver of all comfort, that resignation, which was in future to be his greatest virtue. But scarcely was the service ended, than were heard the licentious cries of the soldiers, who came to drag the Sovereign Pontiff from his palace; the same commissaries were with them, and insulted his state of infirmity, which his age should have made them respect, urging and hastening him, with the most insolent speeches, to banish himself from the capital of his dominions. ‘Alas!’ said the venerable Pontiff to me, ‘do they imagine I should not walk faster were I able?’ I trembled at the idea of what he

was to suffer in the hands of those barbarians who were in such haste to have him in their possession. With my assistance and that of some faithful friends, the illustrious exile was conducted into the court of the Vatican, where the carriage waited. The Heavens never appeared more in unison with the state of our souls. It seemed as if the elements sought to fall into their original chaos, an image of the anarchy that was to reign at Rome after the departure of its legitimate Prince. This convulsion of nature added to the horror of our fearful journey ; yet Braschi was only occupied with

those that accompanied him, he feared only for them the effects of fatigue and bad accommodation.

“ When we arrived at the gates of Rome, we met two commissaries, who, without informing the venerable personage of his destination, said they were to be responsible for his person, upon honor. Braschi answered with a kind of cheerfulness, ‘ That will not be difficult, for in my present state of health, you cannot fear I should run away.’ As soon as day appeared, the inhabitants of the country, recognizing their ancient Sovereign, hastened in crowds to receive his benediction, as did a number of people

throughout Italy and France, during our whole journey. We at first thought this unfortunate Prince would not be banished from his native land. He was conducted to Sienna, where the Grand Duke offered him an asylum. The Pope was lodged at an Augustinian convent, where he lived in the greatest retirement. Yet he received an homage with which he ought to have been flattered ; it was a visit from the English ambassador, who (notwithstanding the difference of religious opinions) came to Sienna on purpose to pay his compliments to the Roman Pontiff, and assure him of the respect and interest with which he inspired him.

“‘I think,’ said Pius VI. one day to me, ‘that they will leave me here; were I certain of it, I should engage my niece, and her family to establish themselves near me. If I had the consolation of seeing them, I feel that I should die with as much content in this cell, as in the quirinal palace.’ He charged me to make inquiry concerning his stay there. I learnt disagreeable news to communicate to the holy Father: The French, or at least those who governed, resolved in their wisdom to send him to Sardinia, and we were to receive orders to embark for that island in a few days.

“ But we believed we should no longer receive any, from men. An earthquake the most violent nearly swallowed up the ruins of the mansion we inhabited. Awakened by the first shock, I was so fortunate as to convey the Pontiff (aided by his faithful domestics) from his apartment, which he had left but a few moments when the cieling fell down. The necessity of repairing the monastery obliged the Grand Duke to request Pius VI. to inhabit a house near Sienna. It was small, but the situation was pleasant, and it became a palace to my illustrious friend, from the pleasure he experienced in seeing his family

there once more. The ladies in simple habits and fictitious names, deceived the vigilance of the French guards of his Holiness, who believed them the wives of artisans, curious to see the Pope. They remained with him some hours, and obtained a promise, that when he should have any settled place of residence, he would acquaint them, that they might visit him even *incognito*, and endeavour by their dutiful attentions, to alleviate in some measure the rigour of his fate. Their attentions were too grateful to my friend not to afford him sensible consolation; but it was decided that no circumstance should

second his vows : The French government, who thought Sienna *too near Rome*, ordered his Holiness to be removed to the Chartreuse convent at Florence.

“It was impossible that the Countess and her daughter could get admission into this austere retreat, so they were obliged to renounce the project of being of any utility to him they revered as a father. If he was disappointed in the hope of seeing himself again surrounded by his family, Heaven had yet reserved for him a flattering consolation, in his interview with the Grand Duke of Tuscany and his family, and the King and

Queen of Sardinia. Their arrival was announced to the holy father, who repaired to an exterior apartment, to which I had the honor to accompany him, and witnessed the most affecting scene: An august personage past his eightieth year, whose silver locks, bereft of his temporal crown, were covered with only that which the power of the church conferred; at once a prisoner, and chief of the most numerous sect on earth; braving the hand of adverse fate, and receiving the visits of Sovereigns, equally illustrious and nearly as unfortunate as himself.

“The Grand Duke it is true yet

preserved his dominions, but on terms so precarious, that he had every thing to fear from those who lent him a feeble authority over his people, on condition that he should give no cause of displeasure to the conqueror of Italy. Yet the Prince assured his venerable host, that nothing should prevent his showing him all the respect that misfortune ought to command; and that he was master to remain in Tuscany as long as he chose. Braschi replied, "In your dominions I shall expect my last hour; for I find my strength inadequate to the fatigues of a journey; and if my persecutors wait yet a little time

that of eternity, which I shall soon make, will leave them nothing to fear.' 'You will not, I hope,' said the Queen of Sardinia, 'deny us the honor of visiting the island of Sardinia, where, though the French republicans have limited our power, you would find sufficient satisfaction to render life supportable.' 'So much goodness does not surprise me, Madam, your Majesty is known throughout all Europe for your piety, and the interesting qualities of your soul; to pass the remainder of my life near you and your illustrious spouse, would be the most grateful solace that Heaven could grant. But my duty

confines me in Italy, and I must not quit the center of christianity, unless compelled by force. —Accuse not then my heart, illustrious companion of my misfortunes, if I accept not an offer, of which I feel all the value; but I owe myself to those whom Providence has confided to me.

“Braschi then changed the subject of conversation; he discoursed on the vicissitude of human life (of which his fate furnished a striking example) with a grace peculiar to himself. I contemplated these Sovereigns, and thought the intrigues of a handful of men, sufficed to rob the great of glory, wealth and

dominion. The glorious names of Charles V. Henry IV. Louis the great, and Amadeus, did not prevent their descendants from becoming the sport of evil fortune ; nor did the Chief of the Apostles preserve his successor from cruel persecution. On whom shall we then rely, before the disposer of all events ? On him whose power is infinite, whose goodness is beyond thought, and who never forsakes those who confide in his mercy. The King and Queen before their departure repeated their intreaties that the Pontiff would follow them into Sardinia. He begged to be excused, except it were decided he

should leave Italy. His enemies, finding his health was likely to be re-established, dropped the project of sending him into Sardinia.

“In fact the mode of life we led at the convent, was well calculated to restore strength to one debilitated by chagrin and fatigue; the air was excellent, our nourishment simple but wholesome, we retired to rest with the setting sun, and that luminary, far advanced in his course the next morning, beheld us in the arms of Morpheus; peaceful occupations, tranquillity and retreat calmed by degrees the agitated mind of my friend, and I had the satisfaction to see him, as it

were, revive again. I communicated the pleasing news to the Duchess, who flattered herself that her uncle would quit the convent and establish himself at Florence, where she might visit him. But the severe republicans determined otherwise. When he was enough recovered to celebrate divine service, they concluded he might be removed, and signified to the Grand Duke, that the Pontiff should depart. 'Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your laws, for I find no fault in him.' Such was the answer of the Roman governor to the Jews. In like manner the Grand Duke for

some time resisted the orders of the Directory ; but at last they were intimidated in so positive a manner, that Pius VI. fearing he should involve the Tuscan Prince in a war he was unable to support, was the first to consent to leave his dominions. But his intention was retarded by a grievous malady, which made the French government renounce the idea of obliging him to make a sea voyage, but not that of having him wholly in their power.

“ While the Grand Duke solicited from the Emperor, and King of Spain an asylum for the unfortunate Pontiff, the commissaries came

to carry him off. At the moment they conducted him to his carriage, I took the liberty of asking whither they intended to convey him. 'That is not your business, follow him or remain behind, that little concerns us, but it is of great consequence to conceal the place of his destination, that we may avoid the importunity of a numerous sect, who yet believe in the simplicity of their hearts, that the Pope is of a different nature from the rest of mankind.'

"Finding I could obtain no information concerning our rout, we resolved to submit to the will of our conductors. On leaving

Florence, we traversed the beautiful country which separates Tuscany from the Duchy of Parma; and notwithstanding the precautions of the *commissaries*, the roads were covered with a multitude of people, eager to see the visible chief of the faith of their ancestors; and these good persons hastened to procure him all the comforts in their power, happy to receive his benediction in exchange. The Prince of Parma demanded and obtained leave to invite his Holiness to pass some days in his capital city, where the Pontiff received from him all testimonies of attachment, due from a son to a father.

The moments my unhappy friend passed there were the last enjoyed free from pain, physical or moral. From the time he was constrained to pursue his journey, he was harassed by the fatigue and inconveniences of a difficult rout, at an advanced age, through mountains that had for a long time appeared insurmountable barriers, which however must be passed. I cannot yet without shuddering call to mind my friend traversing Mount Genève, carried during four hours by men, who held him suspended over precipices, of which we could scarcely bear the view, notwithstanding the secure gait of our

mules ; far less alarmed for ourselves than for Braschi, whose hoary locks (white as the snow that surrounded us) were agitated by the piercing wind which rendered the cold almost insupportable. The Piemontese Officers who accompanied, intreated the Pope to accept their pellises to protect him from the cold. He thanked them in the most grateful terms : ‘ I want nothing,’ said he with celestial serenity, ‘ I am not cold, I do not suffer, the hand of the Almighty sensibly preserves me in the midst of so many dangers. Come my children, my friends, let us take courage, and put our confidence in God.’

“ At last, we entered France. I sat beside my friend, and observed him change colour; his eyes suffused with tears. ‘ This is a moment of weakness,’ said he, seeing my uneasiness, ‘ which I cannot resist, on finding myself on French ground ; where I believe myself destined to augment the number of victims, whose blood has dyed the rivers of that once flourishing country.’ I endeavoured to convince him of the contrary, of which I was far from certain myself. But I was astonished to find so much piety in a land, where it was pretended, that the people had renounced what the modern philosophers call *prejudices*.

“ People came in crowds from all parts to behold the illustrious captive. This concourse was the reason, I am willing to suppose, which determined the commissaries to terminate this perilous journey at Brianson; for I cannot imagine that the unwholesomest situation in France should have been expressly chosen, for the residence of a man past eighty years of age, who was born in the fine climate of Italy.

“ The commissaries appeared dissatisfied at the veneration expressed for the Head of the Church, and thence resolved to conceal him in that place. I repeat, I cannot think them capable of having

formed the project to condemn his last days to the noxious effects of a climate so different from that of his native country. Yet Pius VI. glad of a suspension of the fatigues he had undergone, willingly remained in this inclement, melancholy place; besides, he apprehended he should be dragged to Paris, which he thought inhabited by cannibals. He was lodged in a small house near the hospital, consisting of only three apartments, one of which served for chapel, dining parlour and drawing room. ‘Had I never left Cezena,’ said the Pontiff, ‘I should think myself well lodged here, but after inhabiting

the vatican and quirinal palace, this appears a lowly mansion, and that which you inhabit is, I hear, still less comfortable. And is it for me, my dear Marquis, that you have quitted your country and friends, and exposed yourself to so much fatigue and danger? 'We are happy,' I answered, 'if we can lessen your sufferings.' They were excessive: His physicians declared to the constituent authorities at Briançon, that if his Holiness was not removed from that town, he had but a short time to live. This it seems was not a powerful motive to obtain their consent to his departure, as they paid no attention

to the doctors' opinion, and we were still left in that unpleasant residence, where new evils awaited us."

The day passed away in hearing the recital of the Marquis. My mother, observing that night came on, requested him to defer the sequel of his interesting history till the next morning; and we separated, after a frugal repast.

CHAP. XIV.

The Death of Pius VI.

SCARCE had the rustic implements of labour called the shepherds with their flocks into the fields, than I entered the garden, where I already found the Marquis. "What, up so early !" exclaimed he. "I must rise betimes ; my fortune is not considerable ; I am therefore obliged to inspect the detail of my household economy ;

else I should not be able to maintain my family." "An idea has struck me," he replied, "I am old, but you are a widow, and your attachment to your children seems your only passion; permit me to adopt them by espousing their mother." Astonished at so unexpected a proposal, which was too advantageous to my children to admit a refusal, I begged leave to consult my mother before I decided. He hoped I should not defer it. "I have," he continued, "but a short time to live; I wish it to be embellished by your presence, and my eyes closed by your hands; I will cast a last look on

your children, which will have become mine by our union, and to whom I shall leave a fortune considerable enough to make them remember the husband of their mother with gratitude." I was affected by the benevolent sentiments of this respectable personage, and again told him I should acquaint my mother. He retired with much satisfaction. Chocolate was served at the usual hour; and after the children had left us, the Marquis repeated to my mother the conversation we had in the garden. She was the more sensible to his kindness, as the revolution had reduced our fortune

to mere subsistence, and I had four children, who, without the Marquis's generosity, must have lived in a state of indigence. The good gentleman arose to return to his rural abode, and prepare for our union; when my mother intreated him to favour her with the subsequent history of Pius VI.

"I informed you ladies," continued the Marquis, "that there were new misfortunes reserved for us. Our ferocious guards were a constant prey to suspicion, because the torture of remorse pictured to their imagination, the vengeance due to their crimes. They accused us of a correspondence

with their enemies. Some of our *suite*, to pass away the tedious hours at Briançon, amused themselves in drawing views of its frightful environs. Our guards took them for engineers, making a plan of the fortifications, for the imperial army. These fortifications were not very formidable, the towers being in a ruinous state; but even between friends and brethren, all at that time was conspiracy and suspicion, and orders were given for our removal to the prisons of Grenoble.

“ I had never felt anguish so acute as I experienced when this order was announced to us. I

asked if I should be the only friend obliged to quit his holyness. 'You will make the journey (replied the commissary) with Monsignor Spina, Archbishop of Corinth, Maratti, Caranivli, not forgetting Father Pius, who, notwithstanding his devout air, is perhaps, not the least crafty among you.' 'And Badassai will at least remain?' 'So you may wish,' replied the municipal officer, 'but we cannot allow you that pleasure, he must accompany you to Grenoble, and you will seek other spies.' 'We are none of us made for that base employment.' 'Not more *vile* than ano-

ther,' replied the commissary, who had probably exercised it, before he was entrusted with the confidence of the people; however that may be, he granted us but two hours, to prepare, for a separation from our dear master.

"But what afflicted us most was to have to communicate this intelligence to my friend. I felt, it would be a mortal blow to his constitution. Our society had continually diverted his mind from painful recollections. We constantly vied with each other in choosing the most soothing subjects of conversation to dissipate mournful ideas; and often suc-

ceeded so far as to kindle effusions of gaiety in our social intercourse. Braschi felt (as I had foreseen) the most violent grief at being separated from his friends, and I am bold to say, that his school-day companion was not the least regretted. ‘Had they not,’ said he, ‘permitted you to follow me into France, you would be at liberty, and I should flatter myself that you would elude the prying examination of my ferocious keepers, and that each day would bring you to me. But how do they mean to treat you? Is it liberty or life they intend to rob you of? Alas! how fatal has your friendship for

me proved !' Here tears trickled down his palid cheeks. The tears of a person in years are always particularly affecting ; their sensibility has been blunted by so many trials (for to live is to suffer) and that situation must indeed be infinitely deplorable, in which extreme age can yet give those indications of sorrow. The tears of my unfortunate friend wrung my heart with despair.

"We were, however, obliged to set off, and arrived at Grenoble, where we were humanely treated, but I was not the less occupied with the thoughts of my dear Braschi. I continually beheld

him in imagination, alone, languid, and having no one to whom he could disclose his mind. One consolation remained to him—Religion—that daughter of Heaven, who brings comfort into the dungeon, and smooths the bed of the infirm. It was she told the holy Pontiff that he had fulfilled every duty, and pointed out the place his sufferings merited, in that kingdom which shall have no end.

“If there is any censure that impresses tyrants with fear, it is the murmur of the multitude. The conduct of the directory in obliging Pius VI. to leave Italy, in the last stage of life, was openly

disapproved ; but when Briançon was known to be the place of his banishment, his enemies were universally accused of barbarity. It was not necessary to be of the catholic religion, to commiserate the sufferings of this unhappy personage, it sufficed to have the common feelings of humanity. The directory no longer dared to prolong his misery, by detaining his infirm frame, already chilled by age, in a climate, whose frigid temperature ceded not even to the summer's sun.

“There was an order issued to have Pius VI. removed to Valence, where in a pure and serene atmos-

phere, his health would have been re-established if possible. We were ignorant at Grenoble of our Sovereign's destiny, and were occupied in lamenting him, when a Magistrate entered our prison, and desired us to prepare to depart.— 'Whither are we to go?' 'I know not.' I stood near Monsignor Spina, and pressed his hand—he understood me, and appeared, like myself, resigned to die. We were far from imagining, that the cruelty of the Pontiff's persecutors, at last tired by his patience, had not only sought to revive his drooping health by the vivifying beams of the sun at Valence, whose rays

were never seen to shine at Briançon, but designed to restore him to his disconsolate friends. What was our astonishment, while we thought ourselves on the road to Paris, to find we were arrived at the citadel of Valence. There we were shewn into a garden which appeared to be that of the Governor. 'They treat us with distinction,' said I facetiously to my companions, 'we shall be more pleasantly lodged here than at Grenoble. Ah! had they brought Pius VI. to this place he would at least have had the benefit of pure air. We now saw a glass folding door open, and two men advance,

rolling an invalid chair, in which was seated a venerable personage. To recognize him, run and throw ourselves at his feet, which we bathed with our tears, was but the work of a moment. ‘Gracious Heavens!’ said the Pontiff, ‘do I once more behold my dear friends? What thanks are due to him who brings us consolation, when we least expect it! I thought Providence had inspired my enemies with pity, since they had taken me from the frozen mountains of Briançon; how much more pleasure have they conferred, by granting me your society! I felt since my arrival, that there is no favorable

climate far from the converse of friendship. I hope you will leave me no more.' We assured him that force should alone oblige us to quit him, and declared that we only wished to share his captivity; we beheld him with the tenderest affection; to us he was a father, and worthy our highest reverence.

"His strength returned, and the pleasure of seeing us had spread over his care-worn features a ray of that hilarity, which in the days of his power tempered the majesty of his countenance. He remained in the garden till dinner hour. His Major Domo announced to his Holiness it was served: on

entering, I was struck with the poverty of the furniture. Was there not amongst the numberless objects of luxury which his enemies had seized, what would suffice for the convenient accommodation of the illustrious stranger? But it appeared that this was not thought of.

“Yet Pius VI. was not without friends, though a prisoner: a powerful Monarch acknowledged him as Head of the Church and Sovereign of Rome—the King of Spain had sent M. Labrador to visit him at Briançon, as his minister; and when the Pope changed his place of residence, M. Labrador followed him to Valence, and every day

came to inquire after his Holiness's health, who received him with great pleasure. This amiable young man, who by his polished wit excited pleasing remembrances in the mind of the Pope, paid his compliments at the Captive's dinner hour. He arrived at Briançon after my departure, therefore I did not know him there, but we were soon acquainted, and I saw with satisfaction that he was extremely attached to my unfortunate friend. He resented the injustice of the French government, as if he had suffered personally, and talked of it with a warmth that did honor to the sensibility of his soul; but that of

Braschi being filled with the divine spirit, of which he was the infallible interpreter, took the ambassador's hand, desired him to cast his eyes on a crucifix, and then uttered these memorable words—'When the King of Kings reduced himself to this state for the salvation of mankind, dare *we* complain?' So it was that the Vicar of Christ was happy to resemble him in suffering. The nearer he approached the term of his sublunary existence, the more ardent seemed his devotion. It appeared as if his soul anticipated the moment when, divested of its mortal envelope, it would be wholly occupied in blessing the

God of all mercy. He recited the canticles, especially those of the prophets, with a degree of fervour, which he imparted to all who heard him. He often pressed to his lips with humble piety, the images of the Saints, protectors of the faithful, that they might address vows to the Almighty for his deliverance, not the emancipation dependent on the will of man, but that which should conduct him to eternity. Sometimes he prayed aloud ; what heart could then resist his divine enthusiasm? He wished to precede us in the realms above, that he might there see our place." Ah ! may I one day join

him in the blest abodes ! Eternal happiness ! which heightens the friendship, that was the charm of my life, may you unite us in the bosom of the Most High.

“Less disengaged from terrestrial affections than the holy Pontiff, we flattered ourselves that his life would be prolonged yet some years. Vain hopes ! He would not have been permitted to remain in tranquillity at Valence. The Russian troops now advanced, and it was feared they intended to carry off the aged, miserable personage. The directory in consequence decided August 4th, 1798, that he should be sent to Dijon. When

my friend learned this news, he sorrowfully exclaimed, "They will not then allow me to die in peace." How could they torture this infirm and aged Pontiff; by thus obliging him to undertake repeatedly such long and fatiguing journies ! Death had already seized half his prey: one side of his Holiness's body was paralyzed ; the distemper had fixed in his legs, and menaced his speedy dissolution.

" Yet the order was issued that we should set off August 20th, and we apprized M. Labrador the evening previous to our intended journey, that he might follow us into Burgundy. The holy Father

had dined that day with tolerable appetite, and we left him to take our *siesta* (sleep after dinner, according to the Italian custom); scarce had we enjoyed one hour's repose than I was awakened by the sound of his bell; whether from instinct, or that I depended most on myself for the office of serving him, I arose, and ran to his chamber; I found him motionless; I threw myself on his inanimate body, making every effort to revive him. The attendants now entered, his physician was called, and said my friend had not yet received his divine reward, and asked for the assistance of the faculty; they ar-

rived: but what could be effectually administered to one extenuated by sickness, age and sorrow? Yet he continued eight days in a state so near death, that the public papers announced his decease, and he was mourned by his friends in Italy, while we were edified by his last actions. — He seemed to awake from his lethargy only to fulfil the duties the church of which he was the chief requires on the bed of death.

“ He no sooner opened his eyes than he asked for his confessor. With what respect did he receive the author of his being!* The awe

* He got himself placed in an arm chair, His respect for the Divinity not permitting him to re-

which his piety impressed arrested our tears. Why weep the fate of a man, who is going to enjoy the felicity, of which the holy sacrament is the pledge?

“Yet I could not support the idea of no more beholding him, whose friendship, when he was all powerful, had embellished my life, and to whom I had the happiness of being of some utility in his adverse fortune. It is so hard to exist alone, when we have lived a mutual heart. I could not hide from myself that a few days, or perhaps a few hours, would deprive me of my friend. I was therefore receive the holy communion in his bed, notwithstanding his extreme weakness.

resolved not to lose those which remained, by quitting his pillow a moment. I respectfully stored in my mind, the words which the holy Pontiff uttered with difficulty, but they evinced that he retained that wisdom with which God had endowed him.

“His eyes were often lifted up to Heaven, and the motion of his lips indicated that he prayed incessantly. Fearing this continual exertion would exhaust his little remaining force, I ventured to say—
‘Are you then wholly taken up in the contemplation of the celestial mansions, and will you converse with us no longer?’ ‘I am further,

dear Marquis, than you suppose, from that state of perfection that regards not the interests of this perishable world. I pray, it is true; but it is for those I love; and even on the bed of death I retain a tender attachment for those I shall soon leave; I pray for my nephews and the dear Constanza; I beseech the Almighty to diminish the Countess's grief, and that she may not offend the Supreme Being by immoderate affliction.' He then ceased, and began again to pray. In a short time he thus addressed me—'Do you believe that we shall meet in the kingdom of Heaven?' 'I believe it firmly,' I re-

plied, and wretched must be the person who has not this consoling idea—the death of his friend must reduce him to despair. ‘Tell the Countess,’ continued he, ‘if you see her again, that her friend died thinking of her, and that he could do so without offence to his divine master. She knows the purity of my attachment. Could I see her and my niece once more, I should die contented ; but I ought to make this sacrifice ; receive it, O my God ! and pardon me if I cannot entirely divest myself of worldly affections, which engage my soul, and seem to hinder it from ascending to Heaven. You per-

mit this, O my God, while we inhabit this vale of tears, to soothe its sorrows; but now that you are pleased to call me to your eternal tabernacles, take possession of all the faculties of my soul, and there solely reign, and grant that the moment I shall resign my breath, I may be already in my sentiments an inhabitant of the celestial mansions! In pronouncing these words, his physiognomy brightened, his eyes beamed hallowed fire. So must have appeared the prophets inspired by the spirit of the Lord. He now prayed in a low voice; but suddenly fell into a kind of extacy, in which he seemed to commune

with God, exclaiming aloud—O, do not abandon the most beautiful and fertile country of the earth to the impious ; recal your ministers to its bosom. You will pardon these *deluded people* ; the purest incense will one day burn on their altars ; my successor, more fortunate than me, shall resume his rights over France, which only waits a great man to banish the villains that oppress her, and recal the honest citizens, they sacrificed to their licentious ambition. Inspire him who shall govern that fine region with the spirit of piety, which did not prevent St. Louis from being the greatest of

Kings! and grant that the pomp of government may lend new splendour to the catholic worship in the temples of the French empire!' He then uttered some words I could not understand; but seemed to refer to events we have since seen come to pass, revealed to him in his last hour. But I was too much oppressed with the fear of seeing extinguished that lamp of life, which shone more bright on its decline, to seek the sense of interrupted words, pronounced in a faint tone.

"The Archbishop of Corinth, who judged that the more the Pontiff's intellectual powers developed,

themselves, the nearer his mortal frame was to destruction, asked him if he would not wish to receive extreme unction. 'Certainly I wish it, my soul thirsts after the grace of God, and I shall neglect no means to procure it. The Prelate administered this last office with tears. Pius VI. received it with a respect and submission, that would, if that were possible, have added to our veneration for him. He answered the prayers of the Archbishop.

"When the ceremony was over, he ordered all those who had followed him into France to be assembled; he thanked them in the

kindest terms, adding, that he only regretted his former splendour, because it would have afforded him an opportunity of testifying his gratitude for their attachment to him. They all exclaimed, ‘ We desire nothing, holy Father, but your benediction.’ He made an effort to rise on his pillow. I guessed his intention, and, passing my arm round his body, sustained him, while he cast a last look on all that were in the chamber : he saluted and blessed them ; then as if his soul were exhaled in his last vows for his friends, he fell upon my bosom, endeavouring with a feeble hand to make the august sign of

our religion ; he pressed his breast, lifted his eyes to Heaven, turned them on me, and then closed them for ever.

“I still held his cold remains in my arms while his soul was received by the Prince of Apostles, and presented to God, as that of one of the worthiest successors of St. Peter. But when I felt his limbs become stiff, saw his livid lips vainly endeavouring to utter what his palsied tongue could no longer articulate, my blood ran cold in my veins, and I fell by his side almost as lifeless as the Pontiff who had just expired. I was removed to my bed, which I was

not able to quit for six months, having been seized with a violent malady. When I was out of danger I learnt, that Government had rendered the funeral rights due to the Pope. Thus ended the most respectable of men, and the most pious of God's ministers.

“ I regretted for a long time having survived my beloved friend. You alone, madam, have taught me to set any value on life, since I am allowed to terminate it near you. During the short period that remains of my existence, we shall still speak of my illustrious friend, and after my decease you will tell those who dare to calumniate him,

the Marquis *** was his friend, he heard him heave his last sigh, and was a man of the greatest veracity. He has represented him a *true* philosopher on the pontifical throne, and a saint in the prison of Valence, which he had the honor to share with him."

F I N I S.





